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The gift of

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Du

CAMILLA:

OR,

A PICTURE OF YOUTH.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

EVELINA AND *CECILIA*.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

A NEW EDITION.

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CAMILLA,

CAMILLA,

OR

A. PICTURE OF YOUTH.

VOL. III.

B O O K V.

CHAP. I.

A Youth of the Times.

MRS. Arlbery accompanied Camilla the next day to Cleves, to ask permission of Mr. Tyrold for the excursion. She would trust the request to none but herself, conscious of powers of persuasion unused to repulse.

Mr. Tyrold was distressed by the proposition: he was not satisfied in trusting his unguarded Camilla to the dissipation of a public place, except under the wing of her mother; though he felt eager to remove her from Edgar, and rejoiced in any opportunity to allow her a change of scene that might revive her natural spirits, and unchain her heart from its unhappy subjection.

Perceiving him undetermined, Mrs. Arlbery called forth all her artillery of eloquence and grace, to forward her conquest. The licence she allowed herself in common of fantastic command, gave way to the more feminine attraction of soft pleading: her satire, which, though never malignant, was often alarming, she relinquished for a sportive gaiety that diffused general animation; and Mr. Tyrold soon, though not caught like his daughter, ceased to wonder that his daughter had been caught.

In this indecision he took Camilla apart, and bad her tell him, without fear or reserve, her own feelings, her own wishes, her own opinion upon this scheme. She held such a call too serious and too kind for disguise: she hid her face upon his shoulder and wept; he soothed and encouraged her to confidence; and, in broken accents, she then acknowledged herself unequal, as yet, to fulfilling his injunctions of appearing cheerful and easy, though sensible of their wisdom.

Mr. Tyrold, with a heavy heart, saw how much deeper was her wound, than the airiness of her nature had prepared him to expect; and could no longer hesitate in granting his consent. He was it was her wish to go, but he saw that the pleasures of a public place had no share in exciting

it. To avoid betraying her conscious mortification was her sole and innocent motive; and though he would rather have sent her to a more private spot, and have trusted her to a more retired character, he yet thought it possible, that what opportunity presented unsought, might, eventually, prove more beneficial than what his own choice would have dictated; for public amusements, to the young and unhackneyed, give entertainment without requiring exertion; and spirits lively as those of Mrs. Arlbery create nearly as much gaiety as they display.

Fixed, now, for the journey, he carried Camilla to her uncle to take leave. The prospect of not seeing her again for six weeks was gloomy to Sir Hugh, though he bore it better at this moment, when his fancy was occupied by arranging preparations for the return of Clermont, than he could have done at almost any other. He put into her hands a fifty pound bank-note for her expences, and when, with mingled modesty and dejection, she would have returned the whole, as unnecessary even to her wishes, Mr. Tyrold, interfering, made her accept twenty pounds; Sir Hugh pressed forward the original sum in vain; his brother, though always averse to refuse his smallest desire, thought it here a duty to

be firm, that the excursion, which he granted as a relief to her sadness, might not lead to pleasures ever after beyond her reach, nor to their concomitant extravagance. She could not, he knew, reside at Tunbridge with the œconomy and simplicity to which she was accustomed at Etherington; but he charged her to let no temptation make her forget the moderate income of which alone she was certain; assuring her, that where a young woman's expences exceeded her known expectations, those who were foremost to praise her elegance, would most fear to form any connection with her, and most despise or deride her in any calamity.

Camilla found no difficulty in promising the most exact observance of this instruction; her heart seemed in sackcloth and ashes, and she cared not in what manner her person should be arrayed.

Sir Hugh earnestly enjoined her not to fail to be at Cleves upon the arrival of Clermont, intimating that the nuptials would immediately take place.

She then sought Eugenia, whom she found with Dr. Orkborne, in a state of mind so perfectly calm and composed, as equally to surprise and rejoice her. She saw with pleasure that all Bellamy had inspired was the most artless compassion; for since his dismissal had now positively
been

been given, and Clermont was actually summoned, she devoted her thoughts solely to the approaching event, with the firm, though early wisdom which distinguished her character.

Indiana joined them ; and, in a low voice, said to Camilla, " Pray, cousin, do you know where Mr. Macdersey is ? because I am sadly afraid he's dead."

Camilla, surprised, desired to know why she had such an apprehension ?

" Because he told me he'd shoot himself through the brains if I was cruel—and I am sure I had no great choice given me : for, between-ourselves, Miss Margland gave all the answers for me, without once stopping to ask me what I should chuse. So if he has really done it, the fault is more her's than mine."

She then said, that, just after Camilla's departure the preëeding day, Mr. Macdersey arrived, and insisted upon seeing her, and speaking to Sir Hugh, as he was ordered into Kent, and could not go so far in suspence. Sir Hugh was not well enough to admit him ; and Miss Margland, upon whom the office devolved, took upon her to give him a positive refusal ; and, though she went into the room while he was there, never once would let her make an answer for herself.

Miss Margland, she added, had frightened Sir Hugh into forbidding him the house, by comparing him with Mr. Bellamy; but Mr. Macdersey had frightened them all enough, in return, as he went away, by saying, that as soon as ever Sir Hugh was well, he would call him out, because of his sending him word down stairs not to come to Cleves any more, for he had been disturbed enough already by another Irish fortune-hunter, that came after another of his nieces; and he was the more sure Mr. Macdersey was one of them, because of his being a real Irishman, while Mr. Bellamy was only an Englishman.

Mrs. Arlbery now sent to hasten Camilla, who, in returning to the parlour, met Edgar. He had just gathered her intended journey, and, sick at heart, had left the room. Camilla felt the consciousness of a guilty person at his sight; but, he only slightly bowed; and coldly saying, "I hope you will have much pleasure at Tunbridge," went on to his own chamber.

Camilla, shocked by such obvious displeasure, quitted Cleves with still increasing sadness; and Mrs. Arlbery would heartily have repented her invitation, but for her dependance upon Sir Sedley Clarendel.

At

CAMILLA.

7

At Etherington they stopt, that Camilla might prepare her package for Tunbridge. Mrs. Arlbery would not alight.

While Camilla, with a maid-servant, was examining her drawers, the chamber-door was opened by Lionel, for whom she had just inquired, and who, telling her he wanted to speak to her in private, turned the maid out of the room.

Camilla begged him to be quick, as Mrs. Arlbery was waiting.

"Why then, my dear little girl," cried he, "the chief substance of the matter is neither more nor less than this: I want a little money."

"My dear brother," said Camilla, pleasure again kindling in her eyes as she opened her pocket-book, "you could never have applied to me so opportunely. I have just got twenty pounds; and I do not want twenty shillings. Take it, I beseech you, any part, or all."

Lionel paused and seemed half-choaked. "Camilla," he cried presently, "you are an excellent girl. If you were as old and ugly as Miss Margland, I really believe I should think you young and pretty. But this sum is nothing. A drop of water to the ocean."

Camilla now, drawing back, disappointed and displeased, asked how it was possible he should want more.

"More, my dear child? why I want two or three cool hundred."

"Two or three hundred?" repeated she, amazed.

"Nay, nay, don't be frightened. My uncle will give you two or three thousand; you know that. And I really want the money. It's no joke, I assure you. It's a case of real distress."

"Distress? impossible! what distress can you have to so prodigious an amount?"

"Prodigious! poor little innocent! dost think two or three hundred prodigious?"

"And what is become of the large sums extorted from my uncle Relvil?"

"O that was for quite another thing. That was for debts. That's gone and over. This is for a perfectly different purpose."

"And will nothing—O Lionel!—nothing touch you? My poor mother's quitting England—her separation from my father and her family—my uncle Relvil's severe attack—will nothing move you to more thoughtful, more praise-worthy conduct?"

"Camilla, no preaching! I might as well cast myself upon the old ones at once. I come to you in preference, on purpose to avoid sermonizing. However, for your satisfaction, and to spur you to serve me, I can assure you I have avoided all new debts since the last little deposit of the poor sick hypochon-

hypochondriac miser, who is pining away at the loss of a few guineas, that he had neither spirit nor health to have spent for himself."

"Is this your reasoning, your repentance, Lionel, upon such a catastrophe?"

"My dear girl, I am heartily concerned at the whole business, only, as it's over, I don't like talking of it. This is the last scrape I shall ever be in while I live. But if you won't help me, I am undone. You know your influence with my uncle. Do, there's a dear girl, use it for your brother! I have not a dependance in the world, now, but upon you!"

"Certainly I will do whatever I can for you," said she, sighing; "but indeed, my dear Lionel, your manner of going on makes my very heart ache! However, let this twenty pounds be in part, and tell me your very smallest calculation for what must be added!"

"Two hundred. A farthing less will be of no use; and three will be of thrice the service. But mind!—you must not say it's for me!"

"How, then, can I ask for it?"

"O, vamp up some dismal ditty."

"No, Lionel!" exclaimed she, turning away from him; "you propose what you knew to be impracticable."

"Well, then, if you must needs say it's for me, tell him he must not for his life own it to the old ones."

"In the same breath, must I beg and command?"

"O, I always make that my bargain. I should else be put into the lecture room, and not let loose again till I was made a milk-sop. They'd talk me so into the vapours, I should not be able to act like a man for a month to come."

"A man, Lionel?"

"Yes, a man of the world, my dear; a knowing one."

Mrs. Arlbery now sent to hasten her, and he extorted a promise that she would go to Cleves the next morning, and procure a draft for the money, if possible, to be ready upon his calling at the Grove in the afternoon. She felt this more deeply than she had time or courage to own to Lionel; but her increased melancholy was all imputed to reflections concerning Mandlebert by Mrs. Arlbery.

That lady lent her chaise the next morning, with her usual promptitude of good-humour, and Camilla went to Cleves, with

a reluctance that never before accompanied her desire to oblige.

Her visit was received most kindly by all the family, as merely an additional leave taking; in which light, though she was too sincere to place it, she suffered it to pass; while, covered with all the confusion of a sharer in his extravagance, she made the petition of Lionel when alone with her uncle.

Sir Hugh seemed much surprised, but protested he would rather part with his coat and waistcoat than refuse any thing to Camilla. He gave her instantly a draft upon his banker for two hundred pounds; but added, he should take it very kind of her, if she would beg Lionel to ask him for no more this year, as he was really so hard run, he should not else be able to make proper preparations for the wedding, till his next rents became due.

Camilla was now surprised in her turn; and Sir Hugh then confessed, that, between presents and petitions, his nephew had had no less than five hundred pounds from him the preceding year, unknown to his parents; and that for this year, the sum she requested made the seventh hundred; without the least account for what purpose it was given.

Camilla now heartily repented being a partner in a business so rapacious, so unjustifiable, and so mysterious; but, kindly interrupting her apology, "Don't be concerned, ~~my~~ dear," he cried, "for there's no help for these things; though what the young boys do with all their money now-a-days, is odd enough, being what I can't make out. However, he'll soon be wiser, so we must not be too severe with him; though I told him, the last time, I had rather he would not ask me so often; which was being almost too sharp, I'm afraid, considering his youngness; for one can't expect him to be an old man at once."

Camilla gave voluntarily her word no such application should find her its ambassador again; and though he would have dispensed with the promise, she made it the more readily as a guard against her own facility.

"At least," cried the baronet, "say nothing to my poor brother, and more especially to your mother; it being but vexatious to such good parents to hear of such idleness, not knowing what to think of it; for 'tis a great secret, he says, what he does with it all; for which reason one can't expect him to tell it. My poor brother, to be sure, had rather he should be studying
hic,

hic, hæc, hoc; but, Lord help him! I believe he knows no more of that than I do myself; and I never could make out much meaning of it; any further than it's being Latin; though I suppose, at the time, Dr. Orkborne might explain it to me, taking it for granted he did what was right."

Camilla was most willing to agree to concealing from her parents what she knew must so painfully afflict them, though she determined to assume sufficient courage to expostulate seriously with her brother, against whom she felt sensations of the most painful anger.

Again she now took leave; but upon re-entering the parlour, found Edgar there alone.

Involuntarily she was retiring, when the counsel of her father recurring to her, she compelled herself to advance, and say, "How good you have been to Eugenia! how greatly are we all indebted for your kind vigilance and exertion!"

Edgar, who was reading, and knew not she was in the house, was surprised, both by her sight and her address, into a softness of voice. he meant evermore to deny himself, as he answered, "To me? can any of the Tyrold family talk of being indebted to me?—my own obligations to all, to every individual of that name, have been
the

the pride, have been—hitherto—the happiness of my life !—”

The word “ hitherto,” which had escaped, affected him : he stopt, recollected himself, and presently, more drily added, “ Those obligations would be still much increased, if I might flatter myself that one of that race, to whom I have ventured to play the officious part of a brother, could forget those lectures, she can else, I fear, with difficulty pardon.”

“ You have found me unworthy your counsel,” answered Camilla, gravely, and looking down ; “ you have therefore concluded I resent it : but we are not always completely wrong, even when wide from being right. I have not been culpable of quite so much folly as not to feel what I have owed to your good offices ; nor am I now guilty of the injustice to blame their being withdrawn. You do surely what is wisest, though not—perhaps—what is kindest.”

To these last words she forced a smile ; and, wishing him good morning, hurried away.

Touched to the soul, he remained, a few instants, immoveable ; then, resolving to follow her, and almost resolving to throw himself at her feet, he opened the door she had shut after her : he saw her still in the
the

the hall, but she was in the arms of her father and sisters, who had descended, upon hearing she had left Sir Hugh, and of whom she was now taking leave.

Upon his appearance, she said she could no longer keep the carriage; but, as she hastened from the hall, he saw that her eyes were swimming in tears.

Her father saw it too, with less surprise, but more pain. He knew her short and voluntary absence from her friends could not excite them: his heart ached with paternal concern for her, and, motioning every body else to remain in the hall, he walked with her to the carriage himself, saying, in a low voice, as he put her in, "Be of better courage, my dearest child. Endeavour to take pleasure where you are going—and to forget what you are leaving; and, if you wish to feel, or to give contentment upon earth, remember always, you must seek to make circumstance contribute to happiness, not happiness subservient to circumstance."

Camilla, bathing his hand with her tears, promised this maxim should never quit her mind till they met again.

She then drove off.

"Yes," she cried, "I must indeed study it; Edgar cares no more what becomes of me!"

me ! resentment next to antipathy has taken place of his friendship and esteem !”

• • • •

Lionel, too impatient to wait for the afternoon, was already at the Grove, and handed her from the chaise. But, stopping her in the portico, “Well,” he cried, “where’s my draft?”

“Before I give it you,” said she, seriously, and walking from the servants, “I must entreat to speak a few words to you.”

“You have really got it, then?” cried he, in a rapture; “you are a charming girl ! the most charming girl I know in the world ! I won’t take your poor twenty pounds : I would not touch it for the world. But come, where’s the draft ? Is it for the two or the three ?”

“For the two ; and surely, my dear Lionel—”

“For the two ? O, plague take it !—only for the two ?—And when will you get me the odd third ?”

“O brother ! O Lionel ! what a question ! Will you make me repent, instead of rejoice, in the pleasure I have to assist you ?”

"Why, when he was about it, why could he not as well come down like a gentleman at once? I am sure I always behaved very handsomely to him."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, I never frightened him; never put him beside his poor wits, like t'other poor nuncle. I don't remember I ever did him an ill turn in my life, except wanting Dr. Pothook, there, to flog him a little for not learning his book. It would have been a rare sight if he had!—Don't you think so?"

"Rare, indeed, I hope."

"Why, now, what could he have done, if the Doctor had really performed it? He could not in justice have found fault, when he put himself to school to him. But he'd have felt a little queer. Don't you think he would?"

"You only want to make me laugh, to prevent my speaking to the purpose; but I am not disposed to laugh; and therefore—"

"O, if you are not disposed to laugh, you are no company for me. Give me my draft, therefore."

"If you will not hear, I hope, at least, Lionel, you will think; and that may be much more efficacious. Shall I put up the twenty? I really do not want it. And it

is

is all, all, all I can ever procure you! Remember that!"

"What?—all?—this all?—what, not even the other little mean hundred?"

"No, my dear brother! I have promised my uncle no further application—"

"Why what a stingy, fussy old codger, to draw such a promise from you!"

"Hold, hold, Lionel! I cannot endure to hear you speak in such a manner of such an uncle! the best, the most benevolent, the most indulgent—"

"Lord, child, don't be so precise and old maidish. Don't you know it's a relief to a man's mind to swear, and say a few cutting things when he's in a passion? when all the time he would no more do harm to the people he swears at, than you would, that mince out all your words as if you were talking treason, and thought every man an informer that heard you. Besides, how is a man the worse for a little friendly curse or two, provided he does not hear it? It's a very innocent refreshment to one's mind, my dear; only you know nothing of the world."

Mrs. Arlbery now approaching, he hastily took the draft, and, after a little hesitation, the twenty pounds, telling her, if she would not ask for him, she must ask for herself, and that he felt no compunction,

tion, as he was certain she might draw upon her uncle for every guinea he was worth.

He then heartily embraced her; said she was the best girl in the world, when she did not mount the pulpit, and rode off.

Camilla felt no concern at the loss of her twenty pounds: lowered and unhappy, she was rather glad than sorry that her means for being abroad were diminished, and that to keep her own room would soon be most convenient.

The next day was fixed for the journey.

CHAP. II.

A Walk by Moonlight.

M^{RS.} Arlbery and Camilla set off in the coach of Mr. Dannel, widower of a deceased sister of the husband of Mrs. Arlbery, whom she was induced to admit of the party that he might aid in bearing the expences, as she could not, from some family considerations, refuse taking her niece into her coterie. Sir Sedley Clarendel drove his own phaeton; but, instead of joining them, according to the condition which occasioned the treaty, cantered away his ponies from the very first stage, and left word, where he changed horses, that he should proceed to the hotel upon the Pantiles.

Mrs. Arlbery was nearly provoked to return to the Grove. With Mr. Dannel she did not think it worth while to converse; her niece she regarded as almost an idiot; and Camilla was so spiritless, that, had not Sir Sedley acceded to her plan, this was the last period in which she would have chosen her for a companion.

Within

Within a few miles of Tunbridge, an accident happened to one of the wheels of the carriage, that the coachman said would take some hours to repair. They stopt, therefore, at a small inn upon the road, whence they sent a man and horse to Tunbridge for chaises.

As they were destined, now, to spend some time in this place, Mrs. Arlbery retired to write letters, and Mr. Dannel to read newspapers; and, invited by a bright moon, Camilla and Miss Dannel wandered from a little garden to an adjoining meadow, which conducted them to a lane, made so beautiful by the strong masses of shade with which the trees intercepted the resplendent whiteness of the moon, that they walked on, catching fresh openings with fresh pleasure, till the feet of Miss Dannel grew as weary with the length of the way, unbroken by any company, as the ears of Camilla with her incessant prattling, unaided by any idea. Miss Dannel proposed to sit down, and, while relieving herself by a fit of yawning and stretching, Camilla strolled a little further in search of a safe and dry spot.

Miss Dannel, following in a moment, on tip-toe, and trembling, whispered that she was sure she heard a voice. Camilla, with a smile, asked if only themselves were privileged

privileged to enjoy so sweet a night?
 "Hush!" cried she, "hush! I hear it again!" They listened; and, in a minute, a soft plaintive tone reached their ears, too distant to be articulate, but undoubtedly female..

"I dare say it's a robber!" exclaimed Miss Dannel shaking; "If you don't run back, I shall die!"

Camilla assured her, from the gentleness of the sound, she must be mistaken; and pressed her to advance a few steps further, in case it should be any body ill.

"But you know," said Miss Dannel, speaking low, "people say that sometimes there are noises in the air, without its being any body? Suppose it should be that?"

Still, though almost imperceptibly, Camilla drew her on, till, again listening, they distinctly heard the words, "My lovely friend."

"La! how pretty!" said Miss Dannel; "let's go a little nearer."

They advanced, and presently, again stopping, heard, "Could pity pour balm into my woes, how sweetly would they be alleviated by yours, my lovely friend!"

Miss Dannel now looked enchanted, and eagerly led the way herself.

In
 L. v. 3

In a few minutes, arriving at the end of the lane, which opened upon a wild and romantic common, they caught a glimpse of a figure in white.

Miss Dannel turned pale. "Dear!" cried she, in the lowest whisper, "what is it?"

"A lady," answered Camilla, equally cautious not to be heard, though totally without alarm.

"Are you sure of that?" said Miss Dannel, shrinking back, and pulling her companion to accompany her.

"Do you think it's a ghost?" cried Camilla, unresisting the retreat, yet walking backwards to keep the form in sight.

"Fie! how can you talk so shocking? all in the dark so, except only for the moon?"

"Yours, my lovely friend!" was now again pronounced in the tenderest accent.

"She's talking to herself!" exclaimed Miss Dannel; "Lord, how frightful!" and she clung close to Camilla, who, mounting a little hillock of stones, presently perceived that the lady was reading a letter.

Miss Dannel, tranquilised by hearing this, was again contented to stop, when their ears were suddenly struck by a piercing shriek.

"O Lord!

"O Lord! we shall be murdered!" cried she, screaming still louder herself.

They both ran back some paces down the lane, Camilla determining to send somebody from the inn to inquire what all this meant: but presently, through an opening to the common, they perceived the form in white darting forwards, with an air wild and terrified. Camilla stopt, struck with compassion and curiosity at once; Miss Dannel could not quit her, but after the first glance, hid her face, faintly articulating, "O, don't let it see us! don't let it see us! I am sure it's nothing natural! I dare say it's somebody walking!"

The next instant, they perceived a man, looking earnestly around, as if to discover who had echoed the scream; the place they occupied was in the shade, and he did not observe them. He soon rushed hastily on, and seized the white garment of the flying figure, which appeared, both by its dress and form, to be an elegant female. She clasped her hands in supplication, cast up her eyes towards heaven, and again shrieked aloud.

Camilla, who possessed that fine internal power of the thinking and feeling mind to adopt courage for terror, where any eminent service may be the result of immediate exertion,

exertion, was preparing to spring to her relief; while Miss Dannel, in extreme agony holding her, murmured out, "Let's run away! let's run away! she's going to be murdered!" when they saw the man prostrate himself at the lady's feet, in the humblest subjection.

Camilla stopt her flight; and Miss Dannel, appeased, called out; "La! he's kneeling! how pretty it looks! I dare say it's a lover. How I wish one could hear what he says!"

An exclamation, however, from the lady, uttered in a tone of mingled affright and disgust, of "leave me! leave me!" was again the signal to Miss Dannel of retreat, but of Camilla to advance.

The rustling of the leaves, caused by her attempt to make way through the breach, caught the ears of the suppliant, who hastily arose; while the lady folded her arms across her breast, and seemed ejaculating the most fervent thanks for this relief.

Camilla now forced a passage through the hedge, and the lady, as she saw her approach, called out, in a voice the most touching, "Surely 'tis some pitying Angel, mercifully come to my rescue!"

The pursuer drew back, and Camilla, in the gentlest words, besought the lady to

accompany her to the friends she had just left, who would be happy to protect her.

She gratefully accepted the proposal, and Camilla then ventured to look round at the object of this alarm: and, with an astonishment that almost confounded her, perceived him, a few yards off, taking a pinch of snuff, and humming an opera air.

The lady, snatching up her letter, which had fallen to the ground, touched it with her lips, and carefully folding, put it into her bosom, tenderly ejaculating, "I have preserved thee!—O from what violation!"

Then pressing the hand of Camilla, "You have saved me," she cried, "from the calamity of losing what is more dear than I have words to express! Take me but where I may be shielded from that wretch, and what shall I not owe to you?"

The moon now shining full upon her face, Camilla saw seated on it youth, sensibility, and beauty. Her pleasure, involuntarily rather than rationally, was redoubled that she had proved serviceable to her, as, in equal proportion, was her abhorrence of the man who had caused the disturbance.

The three females were now proceeding, when the offender, with a careless air, and yet more careless bow, advancing towards

them, negligently said, " Shall I have the honour to see you safe home, ladies?"

Camilla felt indignant; Miss Dannel again screamed; and the stranger, with a look of horror and disgust, said; " Persecute me no more!"

" O hang it! O curse it!" cried he, swinging his cane to and fro, " don't be serious. I only meant to frighten you about the letter."

The lady deigned no answer, but murmured to herself " that letter is more precious to me than life or light!"

They now walked on; and, when they entered the lane, they had the pleasure to observe they were not pursued. She then said to Camilla, " You must be surprised to see any one out, and unprotected, at this late hour; but I had employed myself, unthinkingly, in reading some letters from a dear and absent friend, and forgot the quick passage of time."

A man in a livery now appearing at some distance, she hastily summoned him, and demanded where was the carriage?

In the road, he answered, where she had left it, at the end of the lane.

She then took the hand of Camilla, and with a smile of the utmost softness said, " When the shock I have suffered is a little over, I must surely cease to lament I have

sustained it, since it has brought to me such sweet succour. Where may I find you to-morrow, to repeat my thanks?"

Camilla answered, "she was going to Tunbridge immediately, but knew not yet where she should lodge."

"Tunbridge!" she repeated; I am there myself; I shall easily find you out to-morrow morning, for I shall know no rest till I have seen you again."

She then asked her name, and, with the most tender acknowledgments, took leave.

Camilla recounted her adventure to Mrs. Arlbery, with an animated description of the fair Incognita, and with the most heartfelt delight of having, though but accidentally, proved of service to her. Mrs. Arlbery laughed heartily at the recital, assuring her she doubted not but she had made acquaintance with some dangerous fair one, who was playing upon her inexperience, and utterly unfit to be known to her. Camilla warmly vindicated her innocence, from the whole of her appearance, as well as from the impossibility of her knowing that her scream could be heard: yet was perplexed how to account for her not naming herself, and for the mystery of the carriage and servant in waiting so far off. These latter she concluded
to

to belong to her father, as she looked too young to have any sort of establishment of her own.

“What I don’t understand in the matter is, that there reading of letters by the light of the moon;” said Mr. Dannel. “Where’s the necessity of doing that, for a person that can afford to keep her own coach and servants?”

Mr. Dannel was a man as unfavoured by nature as he was uncultivated by art. He had been accepted as a husband by the sister of Mr. Arlbery, merely on account of a large fortune, which he had acquired in business. The marriage, like most others made upon such terms, was as little happy in its progression as honourable in its commencement; and Miss Dannel, born and educated amidst domestic dissension, which robbed her of all will of her own, by the constant denial of one parent to what was accorded by the other, possessed too little reflexion to benefit by observing the misery of an alliance not mentally assented to; and grew up with no other desire but to enter the state herself, from an ardent impatience to shake off the slavery she experienced in singleness. The recent death of her mother had given her, indeed, somewhat more liberty; but she had not sufficient sense to endure any restraint, and

languished for the complete power which she imagined a house and servants of her own would afford.

When they arrived at the hotel, in Tunbridge, Mrs. Arlbery heard, with some indignation, that Sir Sedley Clarendon was gone to the rooms, without demonstrating, by any sort of inquiry, the smallest solicitude at her non-appearance.

C H A P. III.

The Pantiles.

A SERVANT tapt early at the door of Camilla; the next morning, to acquaint her that a lady, who called herself the person that had been so much obliged to her the preceding day, begged the honour of being admitted.

Camilla was sorry, after the suspicions of Mrs. Arlbery, that she did not send up her name; yet, already partially disposed, her prepossession was not likely to be destroyed by the figure that now appeared.

A beautiful young creature, with an air of the most attractive softness, eyes of expressive loveliness, and a manner which by every look and every motion announced a soul "tremblingly alive," glided gently into the room, and advancing, with a graceful confidence of kindness, took both her hands, and pressing them to her heart, said, "What happiness so soon to have found you! to be able to pour forth all the gra-

titude I owe you, and the esteem with which I am already inspired !”

Camilla was struck with admiration and pleasure ; and gave way to the most lively delight at the fortunate accident which occasioned her walking out in a place entirely unknown to her ; declaring she should ever look back to that event as to one of the marked blessings of her life.

“ If you,” answered the fair stranger, “ have the benevolence thus to value our meeting, how should it be appreciated by one who is so eternally indebted to it ? I had not perceived the approach of that person. He broke in upon me when least a creature so ungenial was present to my thoughts. I was reading a letter from the most amiable of friends, the most refined—perhaps—of human beings !”

Camilla, impatient for some explanation, answered, “ I hope, at least, that friend will be spared hearing of your alarm ?”

“ I hope so ! for his own griefs already overwhelm him. Never may it be my sad lot to wound where I mean only to console.”

At the words *his own*, Camilla felt herself blush. She had imagined it was some female friend. She now found her mistake, and knew not what to imagine next.

“ I had

"I had retired," she continued, "from the glare of company, and the weight of uninteresting conversation, to read, at leisure and in solitude, this dear letter—heart-breaking from its own woes, heart-soothing to mine! In a place such as this, seclusion is difficult. I drove some miles off, and ordered my carriage to wait in the high road, while I strolled alone upon the common. I delight in a solitary ramble by moonlight. I can then indulge in uninterrupted rumination, and solace my melancholy by pronouncing aloud such sentences, and such names, as in the world I cannot utter. How exquisitely sweet do they sound to ears unaccustomed to such vibrations!"

Camilla was all astonishment and perplexity. A male friend so beloved, who seemed to be neither father, brother, nor husband; a carriage at her command, though without naming one relation to whom either that or herself might belong; and sentiments so tender she was almost ashamed to listen to them; all conspired to excite a wonder that painfully prayed for relief: and in the hope to obtain it, with some hesitation, she said, "I should have sought you myself this morning, for the pleasure of inquiring after your safety, but that I was ignorant by what name to make my search."

The fair unknown looked down for a moment, with an air that shewed a perfect consciousness of the inquiry meant by this speech; but turning aside the embarrassment it seemed to cause her, she presently raised her head, and said, "I had no difficulty to find you, for my servant, happily, made his inquiry at once at this hotel."

Disappointed and surprised by this evasion, Camilla saw now an evident mystery, but knew not how to press forward any investigation. She began, therefore, to speak of other things, and her fair guest, who had every mark of an education rather sedulously than judiciously cultivated, joined readily in a conversation less personal.

They did not speak of Tunbridge, of public places, nor diversions; their themes, all chosen by the stranger, were friendship, confidence, and sensibility, which she illustrated and enlivened by quotations from favourite poets, aptly introduced and feelingly recited; yet always uttered with a sigh, and an air of tender melancholy. Camilla was now in a state so depressed, that, notwithstanding her native vivacity, she fell as imperceptibly into the plaintive style of her new acquaintance, who seemed habitually pensive, as if sympathy rather than accident had brought them together.

Yet, when chance led to some mention of the adventure of the preceding evening; and the lady made again an animated eulogium of the friend whose letter she was perusing; she hazarded, with an half smile, saying: "I hope—for his own sake; this friend is some sage and aged personage?"

"O no!" she answered; "he is in the very bloom of youth."

Camilla, again a little disconcerted, paused; and the lady went on:

"It was in Wales I first met him; upon a spot so beautiful that painting can never do it justice. I have made, however, a little sketch of it, which, some day or other, I will shew you, if you will have the goodness to let me see more of you."

Camilla could not refrain from an eager affirmative; and the conversation was then interrupted by a message from Mrs. Arlbery, who always breakfasted in her own room, to announce that she was going out lodging-hunting.

Camilla would rather have remained with her new acquaintance, better adapted to her present turn of mind, than Mrs. Arlbery; but this was impossible, and the lovely stranger hastened away, saying she would call herself the next morning to shew the way to her house, where she hoped they

might pass together many soothing and consolatory hours.

• • • •

Camilla found Mrs. Arlbery by no means in her usual high spirits. The opening of her Tunbridge campaign had so far from answered its trouble and expence, that she heartily repented having quitted the Grove. The Officers either were not arrived in the neighbourhood, or were wholly engaged in military business; Camilla, instead of contributing to the life of the excursion, seemed to hang heavily both upon that, and upon herself; and Sir Sedley Clarendel, whose own proposition had brought it to bear, had not yet made his appearance, though he lodged in the same hotel.

Thus vexatiously disappointed, she was ill-disposed to listen with pleasure to the history Camilla thought it indispensable to relate of her recent visit: and in answer to all praise of this fair Incognita, only replied by asking her name and connexions. Camilla felt extremely foolish in confessing she had not yet learnt them. Mrs. Arlbery laughed unmercifully at her commendations, but concluded with saying: "Follow, however, your own humour; I hate to torment

or be tormented : only take care not to be seen with her in public."

Camilla rejoiced she did not exact any further restriction, and hoped all railery would soon be set aside, by an honourable explanation.

* * * *

They now repaired to the Pantiles, where the gay company and gay shops afforded some amusement to Camilla, and to Miss Dannel a wonder and delight, that kept her mouth open and her head jerking from object to object, so incessantly, that she saw nothing distinctly, from the eagerness of her fear lest any thing should escape her.

Mrs. Arlbery, meeting with an old acquaintance at the bookseller's, sat down with him, while the two young ladies loitered at the window of a toy-shop, struck with just admiration of the beauty and ingenuity of the Tunbridge ware it presented to their view ; till Camilla, in a party of young men who were strolling down the Pantiles, and who went into the bookseller's shop, distinguished the offender of the fair unknown.

To avoid following, or being recollected by a person so odious to her, she entered the toy-shop with Miss Dannel, where she amused herself, till Mrs. Arlbery came in search of her, by selecting such various
little

little articles for purchase as she imagined would amount to about half a crown; but which were put up for her at a guinea. This a little disconcerted her: though, as she was still unusually rich, from Mr. Tyld's having advanced her next quarterly allowance, she consoled herself that they would serve as little keep-sakes for her sisters and her cousin: yet she determined, when next she entered a shop for convenience, to put nothing apart as a buyer, till she had inquired its price.

The assaulter, Lord Newford, a young nobleman of the ~~tax~~, after taking a staring survey of everything and every body around; and seeing no one of more consequence, followed Mrs. Arlbery, with whom formerly he had been slightly acquainted, to the toy-shop. He asked her how she did, without touching his hat; and how long she had been at Tunbridge, without waiting for an answer; and said he was happy to have the pleasure of seeing her, without once looking at her.

To his first sentence, Mrs. Arlbery made a civil answer; but, repenting it upon the two sentences that succeeded, she heard them without seeming to listen, and fixing her eyes upon him, when he had done, coolly said, "Pray have you seen any thing of my servant?"

Lord

Lord Newford, somewhat surprised, replied, "No."

"Do look for him, then," cried she, negligently, "there's a good man."

Lord Newford, a little piqued, and a little confused at feeling so, said he should be proud to obey her; and turning short off to his companion, cried, "Come, Offy, why dost loiter? where shall we ride this morning?" And, taking him by the arm, quitted the Pantiles.

Mrs. Arlbery, laughing heartily, now felt her spirits a little revive; "I doat," she cried, "upon meeting; now and then, with insolence, as I have a little taste for it myself, which I make some conscience of not indulging unprovoked."

They then proceeded to the milliner's, to equip themselves for going to the rooms at night. Mrs. Arlbery and Miss Denneh, who were both rich, gave large orders: Camilla, indifferent to every thing except to avoid appearing in a manner that might disgrace her party, told the milliner to choose for her what she thought fashionable that was most reasonable. She was soon fitted up with what was too pretty to disapprove, and desiring immediately to pay her bill, found it amounted to five guineas, though she had imagined she should have received change out of two.

She

She had only six, and some silver; but was ashamed to dispute, or desire any alteration; she paid the money, and only determined to apply to another person than the seller, when next she wanted any thing reasonable.

Mrs. Arlbery now ordered the carriage, and they drove to Mount Pleasant, where she hired a house for the season, to which they were to remove the next day.

* * * *

In the evening, they went to the rooms, where the decidedly fashionable mien and manner of Mrs. Arlbery, attracted more general notice and admiration than the youthful captivation of Camilla, or the pretty face and expensive attire of Miss Dennek.

Dressed by the milliner of the day, Camilla could not fail to pass uncensured, at least, with respect to her appearance; but her eyes wanted their usual lustre, from the sadness of her heart, and she never looked less herself, nor to less advantage.

The master of the ceremonies brought to her Sir Theophilus Jarard; but as she had seen him the companion of Lord Newford, to whom she had conceived a strong aversion, she declined dancing. He looked surprised,

surprised, but rather offended than disappointed, and with a little laugh, half contemptuous, as if ashamed of having offered himself, stalked away.

Sir Sedley Clarendel was now sauntering into the room. Mrs. Arlbery, willing to shew her young friend in a favourable point of view to him, though more from pique at his distance, than from any thought at that moment of Camilla, told her she ought not to reject Sir Theophilus, whose asking her must be regarded as a particular distinction, for he was notoriously a man of the *ton*. And, heedless of her objections, desired Mr. Dannel to call him back.

"How can I do that," said Mr. Dannel, "after seeing her refuse him with my own eyes?"

"O, nobody cares about a man's eyes," said Mrs. Arlbery; "go and tell him Miss Tyrold has changed her mind, and chooses to dance."

"As to her changing her mind," he answered, "that's likely enough; but I don't see how it's any reason I should go of a fool's errand."

"Pho, pho, go directly; or you sha'n't dine before eight o'clock for the whole Tunbridge season."

"Nay," said Mr. Dannel, who had an horror of late hours, "if you will promise we shall dine more in season."

"Yes,

"Yes, yes," cried Mrs. Arlbery, hurrying him off, notwithstanding the reiterated remonstrances of Camilla.

"See, my dear," she then added, laughing, "how many weapons you must have in use, if you would govern that strange animal called man! yet never despair of victory; for, depend upon it, there is not one of the race that, with a little address, you may not bring to your feet."

Camilla, who had no wish but for one single victory, and whose heart was sunk from her failure in obtaining that one, listened with so little interest or spirit, that Mrs. Arlbery, quite provoked, resolved not to throw away another idea upon her for the rest of the evening. And therefore, as her niece went completely and constantly for nothing with her, she spoke no more, till, to her great relief, she was joined by General Kinsale.

Mr. Dannel, returning, said the gentleman had joined two others, and they were all laughing so violently together, that he could not find an opportunity to deliver his message, for they seemed as if they would only make a joke of it.

Mrs. Arlbery then saw that he had got between Lord Newford and Sir Sedley, and that they were all three amusing themselves, without ceremony or disguise, at the expence of every creature in the room, up
and

and down which they strolled, arm in arm, looking familiarly at every body, but speaking to nobody; whispering one another in hoarse low voices, and then laughing immoderately loud: while nothing was distinctly heard, but from time to time, "What in the world is become of Mrs. Berlington to night?" or else, "How stupid the rooms are without lady Alitheia!"

Mrs. Artbery, who, like the rest of the world, saw her own defects in as glaring colours, and criticised them with as much animated ridicule as those of her neighbours, when exhibited by others, no sooner found she was neglected by this set, than she raved against the prevailing ill manners of the leaders in the *bon ton*, with as much asperity of censure, as if never for a moment betrayed herself, by fashion, by caprice, nor by vanity, to similar foibles. "Yet, after all," cried she presently, "to see fools behave like fools, I am well content. I have no anger, therefore, against Lord Newford; nor Sir Theophilus Jarard; if they were not noticed for being impertinent, how could they expect to be noticed at all? When there is but one line that can bring them forward, I rather respect them that they have found it out. But what shall we say to Sir Sedley Clarendel? A man as much their superior in capacity as in powers of pleasing?"

pleasing? 'Tis a miserable thing, my dear General, to see the dearth of character there is in the world. Pope has bewailed it in women; believe me, he might have extended his lamentation. You may see, indeed, one man grave, and another gay; but with no more "mark or likelihood," no more distinction of colouring, than what simply belongs to a dismal face or a merry one: and with just as little light and shade, just as abrupt a skip from one to the other, as separates inevitably the old man from the young one. We are almost all, my good General, of a nature so pitifully plastic, that we act from circumstances, and are fashioned by situation."

Then, laughing at her own pique, "General," she added, "shall I make you a confession? I am not at all sure, if that wretched Sir Sedley had behaved as he ought to have done, and been at my feet all the evening, that I should not at this very moment, be amused in the same manner that he is himself! yet it would be very abominable, I own."

"That is candid, however."

"O, we all acknowledge our faults, now; 'tis the mode of the day: but the acknowledgment passes for current payment; and therefore we never amend them. On the contrary, they take but deeper root, by losing
all

all chance of concealment. Yet I am vexed to see that odious Sir Sedley shew so silly a passion for being a man of the *ton*, as to suffer himself to be led in a string by those two poor paltry creatures, who are not more troublesome as fops, than tiresome as fools, merely because they are better known than himself upon the turf and at the clubs."

Here, she was joined by Lord O'Lerney and the honourable Mr. Ormsby. And, in the next *faunter* of the *tonnish* triumvirs, Lord Newford, suddenly seeing with whom she was associated, stopt, and looking at her with an air of surprise, exclaimed, "God bless me! Mrs. Arlbery! I hope you are perfectly well?"

"Infinitely indebted to your Lordship's solicitude!" she answered, rather sarcastically. But, without noticing her manner, he desired to be one in her tea-party, which she was then rising to form.

She accepted the offer, with a glance of consciousness at the General, who, as he conducted her, said: "I did not expect so much grace would so immediately have been accorded."

"Alas! my dear General, what can one do? These *tonnish* people, cordially as I despise them, lead the world; and if one has not a few of them in one's train, 'twere as well turn hermit."

She

She now made his lordship so many gay compliments, and mingled so much personal civility with the general entertainment of her discourse, that, as soon as they rose from tea, he professed his intention of sitting by her for the rest of the evening.

She immediately declared herself tired to death of the rooms, and calling upon Miss Dannel and Camilla, abruptly made her exit.

The General, again her conductor, asked how she could leave thus a conquest so newly made?

"I leave," she answered, "only to secure it. He will be piqued that I should go, and that pique will keep me in his head till to-morrow. 'Tis well, my dear General, to put any thing there! But if I had stayed a moment longer, my contempt might have broken forth into satire, or my weariness into yawning: and I should then inevitably have been cut by the *ton* party for the rest of the season."

Miss Dannel, who had been dancing, and was again engaged to dance, remonstrated against retiring so soon; but Mrs. Arlbery had a regular system never to listen to her. Camilla, whom nothing had diverted, was content to retreat.

At the door stood Sir Sedley Clarendel, who, as if now first perceiving them, said to

Mrs.

Mrs. Arlbery, "Ah! my fair friend!—And how long have you been at the Wells?"

"Intolerable wretch!" cried she, taking him apart, "is it thus you keep your conditions? did you draw me into bringing this poor love-sick thing with me, only to sigh me into the vapours?"

"My dear madam!" exclaimed he, in a tone of expostulation, "who can think of the same scheme two days together? Could you possibly form a notion of anything so patriarchal?"

Before they retired to their chambers at the hotel, Camilla told Mrs. Arlbery how shocking to her was the sight, much more any acquaintance with Lord Newford, who was the person that had so much terrified the lady she had met on their journey. Mrs. Arlbery assured her he should be exiled her society, if, upon investigation, he was found the aggressor; but while there appeared so much mystery in the complaint and the conduct of this unknown lady, she should postpone his banishment.

Camilla was obliged to submit; but scarcely rested till she saw again her new favourite the next morning.

CHAP. IV.

Mount Ephraim.

THIS expected guest arrived early. Camilla received her with the only sensation of pleasure she had experienced at Tunbridge. Yet what she excited seemed still stronger: the fair stranger besought her friendship as a solace to her existence, and hung upon her as upon a treasure long lost, and dearly recovered. Camilla soon caught the infection of her softness, and felt a similar desire to cultivate her regard. She found her beauty attractive, her voice melodious, and her manners bewitchingly caressing.

Fearing nevertheless, while yet in ignorance of her connexions, to provoke further ridicule from Mrs. Arlbery by going abroad with her, she proposed deferring to return her visit till another day: the lady consented, and they spent together two hours, which each thought had been but a few minutes, when Mrs. Arlbery summoned Camilla to a walk.

The

The fair unknown then took leave, saying her servant was in waiting; and Camilla and Mrs. Arlbery went to the bookseller's.

Here, that lady was soon joined by Lord O'Lerney and General Kinsale, who were warm admirers of her vivacity and observations. Mr. Dannel took up the Daily Advertiser; his daughter stationed herself at the door to see the walkers upon the Pan-tiles; Sir Theophilus Jarard, under colour of looking at a popular pamphlet, was indulging in a nap in a corner; Lord Newford, noticing nothing, except his own figure as he past a mirror, was shuffling loud about the floor, which was not much embellished by the scraping of his boots; and Sir Sedley Clarendel, lounging upon a chair in the middle of the shop, sat eating *bon bons*.

Mrs. Arlbery, for some time, confined her talents to general remarks: but finding these failed to move a muscle in the face of Sir Sedley, at whom they were directed, she suddenly exclaimed: "Pray, my lord O'Lerney, do you know any thing of Sir Sedley Clarendel?"

"Not so much," answered his lordship, "as I could wish; but I hope to improve my acquaintance with him."

"Why then, my lord, I am much afraid you will conclude, when you see him in one of those reveries, from the total vacancy of

his air, that he is thinking of nothing. But pray permit me to take his part. Those apparent cogitations, to which he is so much addicted, are moments of only pretended torpor, but of real torment; devoted, not as they appear, to supine insipidity, but to painful secret labour how next he may call himself into notice. Nevertheless, my lord, don't let what I have said hurt him in your opinion; he is quaint, to be sure; but there's no harm in him. He lives in my neighbourhood; and, I assure your lordship, he is, upon the whole, what may be called a very good sort of man."

Here she yawned violently; and Sir Sedley, unable to maintain his position, twice crossed his legs, and then arose and took up a book: while Lord Newford burst into a loud laugh; that he awakened Sir Theophilus Jarard, by echoing, "A good sort of man! O poor Clary!—O hang it!—O curse it!—poor Clary!"

"What's the matter with Clary?" cried Sir Theophilus, rubbing his eyes; "I have been boring myself with this pamphlet, till I hardly know whether I am awake or asleep."

"Why, he's a good sort of a man!" replied Lord Newford.

Sir Sedley, though he expected, and even hoped for some pointed strictures, and

could have defied even abuse, could not stand this mortifying praise; and, asking for the subscription books, which, already, he had twice looked over, said: "Is there any body here one knows?"

"O, ay, have you any names?" cried Lord Newford, seizing them first; and with some right, as they were the only books in the shop he ever read.

"Come, I'll be generous," said Mrs. Arlbery, "and add another signature against your lordship's next examination."

She then wrote her name, and threw down half-a-guinea. Camilla, to whom the book was next presented, concluded this the established custom, and, from mere timidity, did the same; though somewhat disturbed to leave herself no more gold than she gave. Miss Demel followed; but her father, who said he did not come to Tunbridge to read, which he could do at home, positively refused to subscribe.

Sir Theophilus now, turning, or rather, tossing over the leaves, cried: "I see no name here one knows any thing of, but Lady Alithea Selmore."

"Why, there's nobody else here," said Lord Newford, "not a soul!"

Almost every body present bowed; but wholly indifferent to reproof, he again

whistled, again stalked up and down the room, and again took a bold and full survey of himself in the looking-glass.

"On the contrary," cried Sir Sedley, "I hear there is a most extraordinary fine creature lately arrived, who is invincible to a degree."

"O that's Mrs. Berlinton," said Sir Theophilus; "yes, she's a pretty little thing."

"She's very beautiful indeed," said Lord O'Lerney.

"Where can one see her?" cried Mrs. Arlbery.

"If she is not at the rooms to-night," said Sir Sedley, "I shall be stupified to petrification. They tell me she is a marvel of the first water; turning all heads by her beauty, winning all hearts by her sweetness, fascinating all attention by her talents, and setting all fashions by her elegance."

"This paragon," cried Mrs. Arlbery, to Camilla, "can be no other than your mysterious fair. The description just suits your own."

"But my fair mysterious," said Camilla, "is of a disposition the most retired, and seems so young, I don't at all think her married."

"This

"This divinity," said Sir Sedley, "for the blessing of every one, yet

Lord of Himself, uncumber'd by a Wife *,

is safely noosed; and amongst her attributes are two others cruel to desperation; she excites every hope by a spouse properly detestable—yet gives birth to despair, by a coldness the most shivering."

"And what," said Mrs. Arlbery, "is this Lady Alithea Selmore?"

"She is Lady Alithea Selmore," drily, but with a smile, answered General Kinsale.

"Nay, nay, that's not to be mentioned irreverently," returned Mrs. Arlbery; "a title goes for a vast deal, where there is nothing else; and, where there is something, doubles its value."

Mr. Dannel, saying he found, by the newspaper, a house was to be sold upon Mount Ephraim, which promised to be a pretty good bargain, proposed walking thither, to examine what sort of condition it was in.

Lord O'Lerney inquired if Camilla had yet seen Mount Ephraim? "No," she answered; and a general party was made for an airing. Sir Sedley ordered his

* Dryden.

phaeton; Mrs. Arlbery drove Camilla in hers; Miss Dannel walked with her father; and the rest of the gentlemen went on horse-back:

* * * *

Arrived at Mount Ephraim, they all agreed to alight, and enjoy the view and pure air of the hill, while Mr. Dannel visited the house. But, just as Mrs. Arlbery had descended from the phaeton, her horses, taking fright at some object that suddenly struck them, reared up, in a manner alarming to the spectators, and terrific to Camilla, in whose hands Mrs. Arlbery had left the reins; while the servant, who stood at the horses' heads, received a kick that levelled him with the ground.

"O jump out! jump out!" cried Miss Dannel, "or you'll be murdered!"

"No! no! keep your seat, and hold the reins!" cried Mrs. Arlbery: "For Heaven's sake, don't jump out!"

Camilla, mentally giddy, but personally courageous, was sufficiently mistress of herself to obey the last injunction, though with infinite labour, difficulty, and terror, the horses plunging and flouncing incessantly.

"Don't you think she'll be killed?" cried Lord Newford, dismounting, lest his own horse should also take fright.

"Do

"Do you think one could help her?" said Sir Theophilus Jarard, steadily holding the bridle of his mare from the same apprehension.

Lord O'Lerney was already on foot to afford her assistance, when the horses, suddenly turning round, gave to the beholders the dreadful menace of going down the steep declivity of Mount Ephraim full gallop.

Camilla now, appalled, had no longer power to hold the reins; she let them go, with an idea of flinging herself out of the carriage, when Sir Sedley, who had darted like lightning from his phaeton, presented himself at the horses' heads, on the moment of their turning, and, at the visible and imminent hazard of his life, happily stopt them while she jumped to the ground. They then, with a fury that presently dashed the phaeton to pieces, plunged down the hill.

The fright of Camilla had not robbed her of her senses, and the exertion and humanity of Sir Sedley seemed to restore to him the full possession of his own: yet one of his knees was so much hurt, that he sunk upon the grass.

Penetrated with surprise, as well as gratitude, Camilla, notwithstanding her own tremor, was the first to make the most anxious inquiries: secretly, however, sighing to herself: Ah! had Edgar thus rescued

me ! yet struck equally with a sense of obligation and of danger, from the horrible, if not fatal mischief she had escaped, and from the extraordinary hazard and kindness by which she had been saved, she expressed her concern and acknowledgments with a softness, that even Sir Sedley himself could not listen to unmoved.

He received, indeed, from this adventure almost every species of pleasure of which his mind was capable. His natural courage, which he had nearly annihilated, as well as forgotten, by the effeminate part he was systematically playing, seemed to rejoice in being again exercised; his good nature was delighted by the essential service he had performed; his vanity was gratified by the publicity of the praise it brought forth; and his heart itself experienced something like an original feeling, unspoiled by the apathy of satiety, from the sensibility he had awakened in the young and lovely Camilla.

The party immediately flocked around him, and he was conveyed to a house belonging to Lord O'Lerney, who resided upon Mount Ephraim, and his lordship's carriage was ordered to take him to his apartment at the hotel.

Mrs. Arlbery, whose high spirits were totally subdued by the terror with which she had been seized at the danger of Camilla,

milla, was so delighted by her rescue, and the courage with which it was effected, that all her spleen against Sir Sedley was changed into the warmest approbation. When he was put into the coach, she insisted upon seeing him safe to the hotel; Camilla, with her usual inartificial quickness, seconding the motion, and Lord O'Lerney, a nobleman far more distinguished by benevolence and urbanity than by his rank, taking the fourth place himself. The servant, who was considerably hurt, he desired might remain at his house.

In descending Mount Ephraim, Camilla turned giddy with the view of what she had escaped, and cast her eyes with redoubled thankfulness upon Sir Sedley as her preserver. Fragments of the phaeton were strewed upon the road; one of the horses lay dead at the bottom of the hill; and the other was so much injured as to be totally disabled for future service.

When they came to the hotel, they all alighted with the young baronet, Camilla with as little thought, as Mrs. Arlbery with little care for doing any thing that was unusual. They waited in an adjoining apartment till they were assured nothing of any consequence was the matter, and Lord O'Lerney then carried them to their new lodging upon Mount Pleasant.

Mrs. Arlbery bore her own share in this accident with perfect good-humour, saying it would do her infinite good, by making her a rigid œconomist; for she could neither live without a phaeton, nor yet build one, and buy ponies, but by parsimonious savings from all other expences.

At night they went again to the rooms. But Mrs. Arlbery found in them as little amusement as Camilla. Sir Sedley was not there, either to attack or to flatter; the celebrated Mrs. Berlinton still appeared not; and Lady Alithea Selmore sat at the upper end of the apartment, engrossing all the beaux, except the General, now at Tunbridge.

This was not to be supported. She arose; and declaring she would take her tea with the invalid, bid the General escort her to his room.

In their way out, she perceived the assembly books. Recollecting she had not subscribed, she entered her name, but protested she could afford only half-a-guinea, upon her present new and avaricious plan.

Camilla, with much secret consternation, concluded it impossible to give less; and a few shillings were now all that remained in

her purse. Her uneasiness, however, presently passed away, upon recollecting she should want no more money, as she was now free of the rooms, and of the library, and equipped in attire for the whole time she should stay.

Miss Dannel put down a guinea; but her father, telling her half-a-crown would have done, said, for that reason, he should himself pay nothing.

Sir Sedley received them with the most unaffected pleasure. Forced upon solitude, and incommoded by pain, he had found no resource but in reading, which of late, except for the mere politics of the day, had been his least occupation. Even reflection had discovered her way to him, though she had long quitted her post to make room for affectation, vanity, and every species of frivolity. Reduced, however, by confinement to be reasonable, he felt the obligation of this charitable visit, and set his foppery and conceit apart, from a desire to entertain his guests. Camilla had not conceived he had the power of being so pleasantly natural; and the strong feeling of gratitude in her ever warm heart, made her contribute what she was able to the cheerfulness of the evening.

Some time after General Kinsale was called out, and presently returned with

Major Cerwood, just arrived from the regiment; who, with some apology to Sir Sedley, hoped he might be pardoned for preferring such society to the rooms.

Mrs. Arlbery, emerging from the mortifications of neglect, which she had experienced, almost for the first time in her life, at the rooms, was unusually alive and entertaining; Sir Sedley kept pace with her, and the discourse was so whimsical and so gay, that Camilla, amused, and willing to encourage a sensation so natural to her, after a sadness for so long a time unremitting, once more heard and welcomed the sound of her own laughter.

It was instantly, however, and strangely checked; a sigh, so deep that it might rather be called a groan, made its way through the wainscot of the next apartment.

Much raillery followed the sight of her changed countenance; the hotel was pronounced to be haunted, and by a ghost reduced to that plight from her cruelty. But the good humour and gaiety of the conversation soon brought her again to its tone; and time passed with general hilarity, till they observed that Miss Dannel, who, having no young female to talk with of her own views and affairs, was thoroughly tired, had fallen fast asleep upon her chair.

Her

Her father was already gone home to a hot supper, which he had ordered in his own room, and meant to eat before their return; Mrs. Arlbery, to his great discomfort, allowing nothing to appear at night but fruit or oysters.

They now took leave, Mrs. Arlbery conducted by the General, and Camilla by the Major; while Miss Dannel, unassisted and half asleep, stumbled, screamed, and fell, just before she reached the staircase.

The General was first to aid her; the Major, not choosing to quit Camilla; who, looking round at a light which came from the room whence the sigh they had heard had issued, perceived, as it glared in her eyes, it was held by Edgar.

Astonishment, pleasure, hope, and shame, took alternate rapid possession of her mind; but the last sensation was the first that visibly operated, and she snatched her hand involuntarily from the Major.

Mrs. Arlbery exclaimed, "Bless me, Mr. Mandlebert! are you the ghost we heard sighing in that room-yonder?"

Mandlebert attempted to make some slight answer; but his voice refused all sound.

She went on, then, to the carriage of Mr. Dannel, followed by her young ladies, and drove to Mount Pleasant.

CHAP. V.

Knowle.

THE last words of Camilla to Mandelbert, in quitting Cleves, and the tears with which he saw her eyes overflowing, had annihilated all resentment, and left him no wish but to serve her. Her distinction between what was wisest and what was kindest, had penetrated him to the quick. To be thought capable of severity towards so sweet a young creature, the daughter of his guardian, his juvenile companion, and earliest favourite, made him detestable in his own eyes. He languished to follow her, to apologise for what had hurt her, and to vow to her a fair and disinterested friendship for the rest of his life: and he only forced himself, from decency, to stay out his promised week with the baronet, before he set out for Tunbridge.

Upon his arrival, which was late, he went immediately to the rooms; but learnt, upon inquiring for Mrs. Aulberry, that she and her party were already retired.

Glad

Glad to find her so sober in hours, he went to his chamber in the hotel, meaning quietly to read till bed-time, and to call upon her the next morning.

In a few moments, a voice struck his ear that effectually interrupted his studies. It was the voice of Camilla. Camilla at an hotel at past eleven o'clock! He knew she did not lodge there; he had seen, in the books, the direction of Mrs. Arlbery at Mount Pleasant. Mrs. Arlbery's voice he also distinguished, Sir Sedley Clarendel's, General Kinsale's, and, least of all welcome, —the Major's.

Perhaps, however, some lady, some intimate friend of Mrs. Arlbery, was just arrived, and had made them spend the evening there. He rang for his man, bid him inquire who had taken the next room, —and learnt it was Sir Sedley Clarendel.

To visit a young man at an hotel; rich, handsome and splendid; and with a *chaperon* so coquetish, so alluring, and still so pretty; to meet there a flashy Officer, her open pursuer and avowed admirer — 'Tis true, he had concluded Tunbridge: and the Major were gone; but not thus; not with such glaring impropriety; his love, he told himself, was past; but his esteem was still susceptible, and now grievously wounded.

To read was impossible. To hold his watch in his hand, and count the minutes she

she still staid, was all to which his faculties were equal. No words distinctly reached him; that the conversation was lively, the tone of every voice announced, but when that of Camilla struck him by its laughter, the depth of his concern drew from him a sigh that was heard into the next apartment.

Of this, with infinite vexation, he was himself aware, from the sudden silence and pause of all discourse which ensued. Ashamed both of what he felt and what he betrayed, he grew more upon his guard, and hoped it might never be known to whom the room belonged.

When, however, as they were retiring, a scream reached his ear, though he knew it was not the voice of Camilla, he could not command himself, and rushed forth with a light; but the lady who screamed was as little noticed as thought of: the Major was holding the hand of Camilla, and his eye could take in no more: he saw not even that Mrs. Arlbery was there; and when roused by her question, all voice was denied him for answer; he stood motionless even after they had descended the stairs, till the steps of the General and the Major, retiring to their chambers, brought him to some recollection, and enabled him to retreat.

Fully now, as well as cruelly convinced of the unabated force of his unhappy passion,
he

he spent the night in extreme wretchedness; and all that was not swallowed up in repining and regret, was devoted to ruminate upon what possible means he could suggest, to restore to himself the tranquillity of indifference.

The confusion of Camilla persuaded him she thought she was acting wrong; but whether from disapprobation of the character of the Major, or from any pecuniary obstacles to their union, he could not devise. To assist the marriage according to his former plan, would best, he still believed, soothe his internal sufferings, if once he could fancy the Major at all worthy of such a wife. But Camilla, with all her inconsistencies, he thought a treasure unequalled: and to contribute to bestow her on a man who, probably, prized her only for her beauty, he now persuaded himself would rather be culpable than generous.

Upon the whole, therefore, he could merely resolve upon a complete change of his last system; to seek, instead of avoiding her; to familiarise himself with her faults, till he ceased to doat upon her virtues; to discover if her difficulties were mental or worldly; to enforce them if the first, and — whatever it might cost him — to invalidate them if the last.

This

This plan, the only one he could form, abated his misery. It reconciled him to residing where Camilla resided;—it was easy to him, therefore, to conclude it the least objectionable.

* * * * *

Camilla, meanwhile, in her way to Mount Pleasant, spoke not a syllable. Dismay that Edgar should have seen her so situated; while in ignorance how it had happened, made an uneasiness the most terrible combat the perplexed pleasure that lightened, yet palpitated, in her bosom, from the view of Edgar at Tunbridge, and from the sigh which had reached her ears. Yet, was it for her he sighed? was it not, rather, from some secret inquietude, in which she was wholly uninterested?

Mrs. Arlbery, also, spoke not; the unexpected sight of Mandlebert occupied all her thoughts; yet, though his confusion was suspicious, she could not, ultimately, believe he loved Camilla, as she could suggest no possible impediment to his proclaiming his regard. His sigh she imagined as likely to be mere lassitude as love; and supposed, that having long discovered the partiality of Camilla, his vanity had been confounded by the devoirs of the Major.

Miss

Miss Dannel, therefore, was the only one whose voice was heard during the ride ; for now completely awaked, she talked without cessation of the fright she had endured. "La, I thought," cried she, "when I tumbled down, somebody threw me down on purpose, and was going to kill me ! dear me ! I thought I should have died ! And then I thought it was a robber ; and then I thought that candle that came was a ghost ! O la ! I never was so frightened in my life !"

* * * *

The next morning they went, as usual, to the Pantiles, and Mrs. Arlbery took her seat in the bookseller's shop, where the usual beaux were encountered ; and where, presently, Edgar entering, addressed to her some discourse, and made some general inquiries after the health of Camilla.

It was a cruel drawback to her hopes to see him first in public : but the manner of Mrs. Arlbery at the hotel he had thought repulsive ; he had observed that she seemed offended with him since the rencounter at the breakfast given for Miss Dannel ; and he now wished for some encouragement to renew his rights to the acquaintance.

Sir Sedley, though with the assistance of a stick he had reached the library, was not sufficiently

sufficiently at his ease to again mount his horse; a carriage expedition was therefore agitating for the morning, and to see Knowle being fixed upon, equipages and horses were ordered.

While they waited their arrival, Lady Alitheia Selmore, and a very shewy train of ladies and gentlemen, came into the library. Sir Sedley, losing the easy, natural manner which had recently so much pleased Camilla, resumed his affectation, indolence, and inattention, and flung himself back in his chair, without finishing a speech he had begun, or listening to an inquiry why he stopt short. His friends, Lord Newford and Sir Theophilus Jarard, shuffled up to her ladyship; and Sir Sedley, muttering to himself life would not be life without being introduced to her, got up, and seizing Lord Newford by the shoulder, whispered what he called the height of his ambition, and was presented without delay.

He then entered into a little abrupt, half articulated conversation with Lady Alitheia, who, by a certain toss of the chin, a short and half scornful laugh, and a supercilious dropping of the eye, gave to every sentence she uttered the air of a *bon mot*; and after each, as regularly stopt for some testimony of admiration, as a favourite actress in some scene in which every speech is applauded.

What

What she said, indeed, had no other mark than what this manner gave to it; for it was neither good nor bad, wise nor foolish, sprightly nor dull. It was what, if naturally spoken, would have passed, as it deserved, without censure or praise. This manner, however, prevailed not only upon her auditors, but herself, to believe that something of wit, of *s finesse*, of peculiarity, accompanied her every phrase. Thought, properly speaking, there was none in any thing she pronounced: her speeches were all replies, which her admirers dignified by the name of repartees, and which mechanically and regularly flowed from some word, not idea, just preceding.

Mrs. Arlbery, having listened some time, turned entirely away, though with less contempt of her ladyship than of her hearers. Her own auditors, however, except the faithful General, had all deserted her. Even the Major, curious to attend to a lady of some celebrity, had quitted the chair of Camilla; and Edgar himself, imagining, from this universal devotion, there was something well worth an audience, had joined the group.

"We are terribly in the back ground, General!" cried Mrs. Arlbery, in a low voice. "What must be done to save our reputations?"

The

The General, laughing, said, he feared they were lost irretrievably; but added that he preferred defeat with her, to victory without her.

"Your gallantry, my dear General," cried she, with a sudden air of glee, "shall be rewarded! Follow me close, and you shall see the fortune of the day reversed."

Rising then, she advanced softly, and with an air of respect, towards the party; and fixing herself just opposite to Lady Althea, with looks of the most profound attention, stood still, as if in admiring expectation.

Lady Althea, who had regarded this approach as an intrusion that strongly manifested ignorance of high life, thought much better of it when she remarked the almost veneration of her air. She deemed it, however, wholly beneath her to speak when thus attended to; till, observing the patient admiration with which even a single word seemed to be hoped for, she began to pardon what appeared to be a mere tribute to her fame; and upon Sir Theophilus Jarrard's saying, "I don't think we have had such a bore of a season as this these five years," could not refuse herself the pleasure of replying: "I did not imagine, Sir Theophilus, you were already able to count by lustres."

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Her

Her down air of complacency announced the happiness of this answer. The company, as usual, took the hint, and approbation was buzzed around her. Lord Newford gave a loud laugh, without the least conception why; and Sir Theophilus, after paying the same compliment, wished, as it concerned himself, to know what had been said; and glided to the other end of the shop, to look for the word *lustre* in Entick's dictionary.

But this triumph was even less than momentary; Mrs. Arlbery, gently raising her shoulders with her head, indulged herself in a smile that savoured yet more of pity than derision; and, with an hasty glance at the General, that spoke an eagerness to compare notes with him, hurried out of the shop; her eyes dropt, as if fearful to trust her countenance to an instant's investigation.

Lady Alitheia felt herself blush. The confusion was painful and unusual to her. She drew her glove off and on; she dabbed a highly scented pocket handkerchief repeatedly to her nose; she wondered what it was o'clock; took her watch in her hand, without recollecting to examine it; and then wondered if it would rain, though not a cloud was to be discerned in the sky.

To see her thus completely disconcerted, gave a weight to the mischievous malice of Mrs. Arlbery, of which the smallest presence

sence of mind would have robbed it. Her admirers, one by one, dwindled away; with lessened esteem for her talents; and, finding herself presently alone in the shop with Sir Theophilus Jarard, she said, "Pray, Sir Theophilus, do you know any thing of that queer woman?"

The words *queer woman* were guides sufficient to Sir Theophilus, who answered, "No! I have seen her, somewhere, by accident, but—she is quite out of our line."

This reply was a sensible gratification to Lady Alichea, who, having heard her warmly admired by Lord O'Lerney, had been the more susceptible to her ridicule. Rudeness she could have despised without emotion; but contempt had something in it of insolence; a commodity she held herself born to dispense, not receive.

* * * *

When Mrs. Arlbery arrived, laughing, at the bottom of the Pantiles, Camilla heard Sir Sedley Clarendel, who limped after her, ask if his phaeton were ready, and could not forbear saying, "ought you to venture, Sir Sedley, so soon in your phaeton?"

"There's no sort of reason why not," answered he, sensibly flattered, "yes I had certainly rather go as you go."

"Then

"Then that," said Mrs. Arlbery, "must be in Dennel's coach, with him and my little niece here: and then I'll drive the General in your phaeton."

"Agreed!" cried Sir Sedley, seating himself on one of the forms; and then, taking from a paper some tickets, added, "I want a few guineas."

"So do I!" exclaimed Mrs. Arlbery; "do you know where such sort of things are to be met with?"

"Lady Alithea Selmore has promised to disperse some twenty tickets for the master of the ceremonies' ball, and she commands me to help. How many shall I give you?"

"Ask Mr. Dennel," answered she negligently; "he's the only pay-master just now."

Mr. Dennel turned round, and was going to walk away; but Mrs. Arlbery taking him by the arm, said: "My good friend, how many tickets shall Sir Sedley give you?"

"Me!—none at all."

"O fie! every body goes to the master of the ceremonies' ball. Come, you shall have six. You can't possibly take less."

"Six! What should I do with them?"

"Why, you and your daughter will use two, and four you must give away."

"What for?"

"Was ever such a question? To do what's proper and right, and handsome and gallant?"

"O, as to all that, it's what I don't understand. It's out of my way."

He would then have made off; but Mrs. Arlbery, piqued to succeed, held him fast, and said: "Come, if you'll be good, I'll be good too; and you shall have a plain joint of meat at the bottom of the table every day for a fortnight."

Mr. Dennel softened a little here into something like a smile; and drew two guineas from his purse; but more there was no obtaining.

"Come," cried Sir Sedley, "you have canvassed well so far. Now for your fair self."

"You are a shocking creature!" cried she; "don't you know I am turned miser?"

Yet she gave her guinea.

"But the fair Tyrolda does not also, I trust, assume that character?"

Camilla had felt very uneasy during this contest; and now, colouring, said she did not mean to go to the ball.

"Can you ever expect, then," said Mrs. Arlbery, "to have a partner at any other? You don't know the rules of these places. The master of the ceremonies is always a gentleman, and every body is eager to show him respect."

Camilla

Camilla was now still more distressed; and stammered out, that she believed the fewer balls she went to, the better her father would be pleased.

“Your father, my dear, is a very wise man, and a very good man, and a very excellent preacher: but what does he know of Tunbridge Wells? Certainly not so much as my dairy maid, for she has heard John talk of them; but as to your father, depend upon it, the sole knowledge he has ever obtained, is from some treatise upon its mineral waters; which, very possibly, he can analyse as well as a physician: but for the regulation of a country dance, be assured he will do much better to make your over to Sir Sedley, or to me.”

Camilla laughed faintly, and feeling in her pocket to take out her pocket handkerchief, by way of something to do, Mrs. Arlbery concluded she was seeking her purse, and suddenly putting her hand upon her arm to prevent her, said; “No, no! if you don’t wish to go, or choose to go, or approve of going, I cannot, in sober earnestness, see you compelled. Nothing is so detestable as forcing people to be amused. Come, now for Knowle.”

Sir Sedley was then putting up his tickets; but the Major, taking one of them out of his hand, presented it to Camilla, saying:

"Let the ladies take their tickets now, and settle with us afterwards."

Camilla felt extremely provoked, yet not knowing how to resist, took the ticket; but, turning pointedly from the Major to Sir Sedley, said: "I am your debtor, then, sir, a guinea—the smallest part, indeed, of what I owe you, though all I can pay!" And she then resolved to borrow that sum immediately of Mrs. Arlbery.

Sir Sedley began to think she grew handsomer every moment: and, contrary to his established and systematic inattention, upon hearing the sound of the carriages, conducted her himself to Mr. Dennel's coach, which he ascended after her.

Edgar, unable to withstand joining the party, had ordered his horse during the debate about the tickets.

Lords O'Lerney and Newford, Sir Theophilus Jarard, and Major Cerwood, went also on horseback.

Sir Sedley made it his study to procure amusement for Camilla during the ride; and while he humoured alternately the loquacious folly of Miss Dennel, and the under-bred positiveness of her father, intermingled with both comic sarcasms against himself, and pointed annotations upon the times, that somewhat diverted her solicitude and perplexity.

She

She forgot them however, more naturally, in examining the noble antique mansion, pictures, and curiosities of Knowle; and in paying the tribute which taste must ever pay to the works exhibited there of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The house viewed, they all proceeded to the park, where, enchanted with the noble old trees which venerably adorn it, they strolled delightedly, till they came within sight of an elegant form in white, as far distant as their eyes could reach, reading under an oak tree.

Camilla instantly thought of her moonlight friend; but Sir Theophilus called out, "Faith, there's the divine Berlington!"

"Is there, faith?" exclaimed Lord Newford, suddenly rushing forward to satisfy himself if it were true.

Deeming this an ill-bred and unauthorised intrusion, they all stopt. The studious fair, profoundly absorbed by her book, did not hear his lordship's footsteps, till his coat rustled in her ears. Raising then her eyes, she screamed, dropt her book, and darting up, flew towards the wood, with a velocity far exceeding his own, though without seeming to know, or consider, whither her flight might lead her.

Camilla, certain now this was her new friend, felt an indignation the most lively

against Lord Newford, and involuntarily sprung forward. It was evident the fair fugitive had perceived none of the party but him she sought to avoid; notwithstanding Lord Newford himself, when convinced who it was, ceased his pursuit, and seemed almost to find out there was such a sensation as shame; though by various antics, of swinging his cane, looking up in the air, shaking his pocket handkerchief, and sticking his arms a-kimbo, he thought it essential to his credit to disguise it.

Camilla had no chance to reach the flying beauty, but by calling to her to stop; which she did instantly at the sound of her voice, and, turning round with a look of rapture, ran into her arms.

The Major, whose devoirs to Camilla always sought, not avoided the public eye, eagerly pursued her. Edgar, cruelly envying a licence he concluded to result from positive encouragement, looked on in silent amazement; but listened with no small attention to the remarks that now fell from Mrs. Arlbery, who said she was sure this must be the fair Incognita that Miss Tyrold had met with upon the road; and gave a lively relation of that adventure.

He could not hear without delight the benevolent courage thus manifested by Camilla, nor without terror the danger to which it might have exposed her. But
Lord

Lord O'Lerney, with an air of extreme surprise, exclaimed: "Is it possible Lord Newford could give any cause of alarm to Mrs. Berlington?"

"Is she then, my lord, a woman of character?" cried Mrs. Arlbery.

"Untainted!" he answered solemnly; "as spotless, I believe, as her beauty: and if you have seen her, you will allow that to be no small praise. She comes from a most respectable family in Wales, and has been married but a few months."

"Married, my lord? my fair female Quixote assured me she was single."

"No, poor thing! she was carried from the nursery to the altar, and, I fear, not very judiciously nor happily."

"Dear!" cried Miss Dannel, "isn't she happy?"

"I never presume to judge," answered his lordship, smiling; "but she has always something melancholy in her air."

"Pray how old is she?" said Miss Dannel.

"Eighteen."

"Dear! and married?—La! I wonder what makes her unhappy!"

"Not a husband, certainly!" said Mrs. Arlbery, laughing, "that is against all chance and probability."

"Well, I'm resolved when I'm married myself, I won't be unhappy."

"And how will you help it?"

"O, because I'm determined I won't. I think it's very hard if I may'nt have my own way when I'm married."

"'Twill at least be very singular!" answered Mrs. Arlbery.

Camilla now returned to her party, having first conducted her new friend towards a door in the park where her carriage was waiting.

"At length, my dear," said Mrs. Arlbery, "your fair mysterious has, I suppose, avowed herself?"

"I made no inquiry," answered she, painfully looking down.

"I can tell you who she is, then, myself," said Miss Dannel; "she is Mrs. Berlington, and she's come out of Wales, and she's married, and she's eighteen."

"Married!" repeated Camilla, blushing from internal surprise at the conversation she had held with her.

"Yes; your fair incognita is neither more nor less," said Mrs. Arlbery, "than the honourable Mrs. Berlington, wife to Lord Berlington's brother, and, next only to Lady Alithea Selmore, the first coquet, and the reigning cry of the Wells for this season."

Camilla,

Camilla, who had seen and considered her in almost every other point of view, heard this with less of pleasure than astonishment. When a further investigation brought forth from Lord O'Lerney that her maiden name was Melmond, Mrs. Arlbery exclaimed: "O, then, I cease to play the idiot, and wonder! I know the Melmonds well. They are all half crazy; romantic, love-lorn, studious, and sentimental. One of them was in Hampshire this summer, but so immensely "melancholy and gentleman-like *," that I never took him into my society."

"'Twas the brother of this young lady, I doubt not," said Lord O'Lerney; "he is a young man of very good parts, and of an exemplary character; but strong in his feelings, and wild in pursuit of whatever excites them."

"When will you introduce me to your new friend, Miss Tyrold?" said Mrs. Arlbery; "or, rather," (turning to Lord Newford,) "I hope your lordship will do me that honour; I hear you are very kind to her; and take much care to convince her of the ill effects and danger of the evening air."

"O hang it! O curse it!" cried his lordship; "why does a woman walk by moonlight?"

* Ben Jonson.

E 5.

"Why,

“Why, rather, should man,” said Lord O’Lerney, “impede so natural a recreation?”

The age of Lord O’Lerney, which more than doubled that of Lord Newford, made this question supported, and even drew forth the condescension of an attempted exculpation. “I vow, my Lord,” he cried, “I had no intention but to look at a letter; and that I thought, the only read in public to excite curiosity.”

The party being now disposed to return to the Wells, Mrs. Arlbery called upon the General to attend her to the phaeton. Camilla, impatient to pay Sir Sedley, followed to speak to her; but, not aware of her wish, Mrs. Arlbery hurried laughingly on, saying, “Come, General, let us be gone, that the coach may be left, and then Dannel must pay the fees! That will be a good guinea towards my ponies!”

CHAP. VI.

Mount Pleasant.

THE shame and distress natural to every unhackneyed mind, in any necessity of soliciting a pecuniary favour, had now, in that of Camilla, the additional difficulty of coping against the avowed desire of Mrs. Arlbery not to open her purse.

When they arrived at Mount Pleasant, she saw all the horsemen alighted, and in conversation with that lady, and Edgar move towards the carriage, palpably with a design to hand her out: but as the Major advanced, he retreated, and, finding himself unnoticed by Mrs. Arlbery, remounted his horse. Provoked and chagrined, she sprung forwards alone, and when pursued by the Major, with some of his usual compliments, turned from him impatiently and went up stairs.

Intent in thinking only of Edgar, she was not herself aware of this abruptness, till Mrs. Arlbery, following her to her chamber, said, "Why were you so suddenly haughty to the
E 6 Major,

Major, my dear Miss Tyrold? Has he offended you?"

Much surprised, she answered, no; but, forced by further questions to be more explicit, confessed she wished to distance him, as his behaviour had been remarked.

"Remarked! how? by whom?"

She coloured, and was again hardly pressed before she answered, "Mr. Mandlebert, —once—named it to me."

"O ho! did he?" said Mrs. Arlbery, surprised in her turn; "why then, my dear, depend upon it, he loves you himself."

"Me!—Mr. Mandlebert!—" exclaimed Camilla, doubting what she heard.

"Nay, why not?"

"Why not?" repeated she in an excess of perturbation; "O, he is too good! too excelling! he sees all my faults—points them out himself—"

"Does he?"—said Mrs. Arlbery thoughtfully, and pausing: "nay, then,—if so—he wishes to marry you!"

"Me, ma'am!" cried Camilla, blushing high with mingled delight at the idea, and displeasure at its free expression.

"Why else should he caution you against another?"

"From goodness, from kindness, from generosity!—"

"No,

"No, no; those are not the characteristics of young men who counsel young women! We all heard he was engaged to your beautiful vacant-looking cousin; but I suppose he grew sick of her. A very young man seldom likes a silly wife. It is generally when he is further advanced in life that he takes that depraved taste. He then flatters himself a fool will be easiest to govern."

She now went away to dress; leaving Camilla a new creature; changed in all her hopes, though overwhelmed with shame at the freedom of this attack, and determined to exert her utmost strength of mind, not to expose to view the secret pleasure with which it filled her.

She was, however, so absent when they met again, that Mrs. Arlbery, shaking her head, said, "Ah, my fair friend! what have you been thinking of?"

Excessively ashamed, she endeavoured to brighten up. The General and Sir Sedley had been invited to dinner. The latter was engaged in the evening to Lady Althea Selmore, who gave tea at her own lodgings. "The rooms, then, will be quite empty," said Mrs. Arlbery; "so we had better go to the play."

Mr. Denzel had no objection, and Sir Sedley promised to attend them, as it would

would be time enough for her ladyship afterwards.

* * * *

So completely was Camilla absorbed in her new ideas, that she forgot both her borrowed guinea, and the state of her purse, till she arrived at the theatre. The recollection was then too late; and she had no resource against completely emptying it.

She was too happy however, at this instant, to admit any regret. The sagacity of Mrs. Arlbery she thought infallible; and the sight of Edgar in a box just facing her, banished every other consideration.

The theatre was almost without company. The assembly at Lady Alithea Selmore's had made it unfashionable, and when the play was over, Edgar found easily a place in the box.

Lord Newford and Sir Theophilus Jarard looked in just after, and affected not to know the piece was begun. Sir Sedley retired to his toilette, and Mr. Dannel to seek his carriage.

Some bills now got into the box, and were read by Sir Theophilus, announcing a superb exhibition of wild beasts for the next day, consisting chiefly of monkeys who
could

could perform various feats, and a famous ourang outang, just landed from Africa.

Lord Newford said he would go if he had but two more days to live; Sir Theophilus echoed him; Mr. Dennel expressed some curiosity; Miss Dennel, though she protested she should be frightened out of her wits, said she would not stay at home; Mrs. Arlbery confessed it would be an amusing sight to see so many representatives of the dear human race; but Camilla spoke not, and hardly heard even the subject of discourse.

"You," cried the Major, addressing her, "will be there?"

"Where?" demanded she.

"To see this curious collection of animals."

"It will be curious, undoubtedly," said Edgar, pleased that she made no answer; "but 'tis a species of curiosity not likely to attract the most elegant spectators; and rather, perhaps, adapted to give pleasure to naturalists than to young ladies."

Softened, at this moment, in every feeling of her heart towards Edgar, she turned to him, and said, "Do you think it would be wrong to go?"

"Wrong," repeated he, surprised though gratified, "is perhaps too hard a word; but, I fear, at an itinerant show, such as this, a young lady would run some chance of finding

finding herself in a neighbourhood that might seem rather strange to her."

"Most certainly then," cried she, with quickness, "I will not go!"

The astonished Edgar looked at her with earnestness, and saw the simplicity of sincerity on her countenance. He looked then at the Major; who, accustomed to frequent failures in his solicitations, exhibited no change of features. Again he looked at Camilla, and her eyes met his with a sweetness of expression that passed straight to his heart.

Mrs. Arlbery now led the way to the coach; the forwardness of the Major, though in her own despatch, procured him the hand of Camilla; but she had left upon Edgar an impression renovating to all his esteem. She is still, he thought, the same; candid, open, flexible; still, therefore, let me follow her, with such counsel as I am able to give. She has accused me of unkindness;—She was right! I retreated from her service at the moment when, in honour, I was bound to continue in it. How selfish was such conduct! how like such common love as seeks only its own gratification, not the happiness or welfare of its object! Could she, though but lately so dear to me, that all the felicity of my life seemed to hang upon her, become as nothing because destined

tioned to another? No! Her father has been My father, and so long as she retains his respected name, I will watch by her unceasingly.

* * *

In their way home, one of the horses tired, and could not be made to drag the carriage up to Mount Pleasant. They were therefore obliged to alight and walk. Mrs. Arlbery took the arm of Mr. Dannel, which she did not spare; and his daughter, almost crying with sleep and fatigue, made the same use of Camilla's. She protested she had never been so long upon her feet in her life as that very morning in Knowle Park, and, though she leant upon her companion with as little scruple as upon a walking stick, she frequently stopt short, and declared she should stay upon the road all night, for she could not move another step: and they were still far from the summit, when she insisted upon sitting down, saying fretfully, "Nobody minds me, I am sure. I wish I was married! I am sure if I was, I would keep two coaches, one to come after me, and one to ride in. I'm sure papa could afford it too, if he'd a mind

mind; only he won't. I'm sure I'm ready to cry!"

Mr. Dannel and Mrs. Arlbery, who neither of them, at any time, took the smallest notice of what she said, passed on, and left the whole weight both of her person and her complaints to Camilla. The latter, however, now reached the ears of a fat, tidy, neat looking elderly woman, who, in a large black bonnet, and a blue checked apron, was going their way; she approached them, and in a good-humoured voice, said: "What! poor dear! why you seem tired to death! come, get up, my dear; be of good heart, and you shall hold by my arm; for that t'other poor thing's almost hauled to pieces."

Miss Dannel accepted both the pity and the proposal; and the substantial arm of her new friend gave her far superior aid to the slight one of Camilla.

"Well, and how did you like the play, my dears?" cried the woman.

"La!" said Miss Dannel, "how should you know we were at the play?"

"O, I have a little bird," answered she, sagaciously nodding, "that tells me every thing! you sat in the stage box?"

"Dear! so we did! How can you tell that? Was you in the gallery?"

"No,

"No, my dear, nor yet in the pit neither. And you had three gentlemen behind you, besides that gentlemen that's going up the Mount?"

"Dear! so we had! But how do you know? did you peep at us behind the scenes?"

"No, my dear; I never went behind the scenes. But come, I hope you'll do now, for you ha'n't much further to go."

"Dear! how do you know that?"

"Because you live at that pretty house, there, up Mount Pleasant, that's got the little closet window."

"La! yes, who told you so?"

"And there's a pretty cat belonging to the house, all streaked brown and black?"

"O la!" exclaimed Miss Dannel, half screaming, and letting go her arm, "I dare say you're a fortune-teller! Pray, don't speak to me till we get to the light!"

She now hung back, so terrified that neither Camilla could encourage, nor the woman appease her; and she was going to run on, forgetting all her weariness, when the woman said, "Why what's here to do? I am no fortune teller! Why see, my dear, if I must let you into the secret,—you must know—I'm a gentlewoman!" She then removed her checked apron, and
shewed

shewed a white muslin one, embroidered and flounced.

Miss Dannel was now struck with a surprise, of which Camilla bore an equal share. Their new acquaintance appeared herself in some confusion; but having exacted a promise not to have her disguise discovered to *the world*, she told them she lodged at a house upon Mount Pleasant, just by their's, whence she often saw them; that, having a ticket given her, by a friend, for the play, she dressed herself and went into a box, with some very genteel company, who kept their coach, and who sat her down afterwards at another friend's, where she pretended she should be fetched: "But I do my own way," continued she, "and nobody knows a word of the matter: for I keep a large bonnet, and cloak, and a checked apron, and a pair of clogs, or pattens, always at this friend's; and when I have put them on, people take me for a mere common person, and I walk on, ever so late, and nobody speaks to me; and so by that means I get my pleasure, and save my money; and yet always appear like a gentlewoman when I'm known."

She then again charged them to be discreet, saying, that if her method were spread to *the world*, she should be quite undone,
for

for many ladies that took her about with them, would notice her no more. At the same time, as she wished to make acquaintance with such pretty young ladies, she proposed that they should all three meet in a walk before the house, the next morning, and talk together as if for the first time.

Camilla, who detested all tricks, declined entering into this engagement; but Miss Dannel, charmed with the ingenuity of her new acquaintance, accepted the appointment.



Camilla had, however, her own new friend for the opening of the next day. "Ah! my sweet protectress!" cried she, throwing her arms about her neck, "what am I not destined to owe you? The very sight of that man is horror to me!"

"Your alarm, at which I cannot wonder," said Camilla, "prevented your seeing your safety; for Lord Newford was with a large party."

"O! he is obnoxious to my view! wherever I may see him, in public or in private, I shall fly him. He would have torn from me the loved characters of my heart's best correspondent!—"

Camilla

Camilla now felt a little shocked, and colouring and interrupting her, said: Is it possible, Mrs. Berlington—" and stopt not knowing how to go on.

"Ah! you know me then! you know my connexions and my situation!" cried she, hiding her face on Camilla's bosom: "tell me, at least, tell me you do not therefore contemn and abhor me?"

"Heaven forbid!" said Camilla, terrified at such a preparation; "what can I hear that can give you so cruel an idea?"

"Alas! know you not I have prophaned at the altar my plighted vows to the most odious of men? That I have formed an alliance I despise? and that I bear a name I think of with disgust, and hate ever to own?"

Camilla, thunderstruck, answered; "No, indeed! I know nothing of all this!"

"Ah! guard yourself then, well," cried she, bursting into tears, "from a similar fate! My friends are kind and good, but the temptation of seeing me rich beguiled them. I was disinterested and contented myself, but young and inexperienced; and I yielded to their pleadings, unaware of their consequences. Alas! I was utterly ignorant both of myself and the world! I knew not how essential to my own peace
was

was an amiable companion; and I knew not, then, that the world contained one just formed to make me happy!"

She now hung down her head, weeping and desponding. Camilla sought to sooth her, but was so amazed, so fearful, and so perplexed, she scarcely knew what either to say or to think.

The fair mourner, at length, a little recovering, added: "Let me not agitate your gentle bosom with my sorrows. I regard you as an angel sent to console them; but it must be by mitigating, not partaking of them."

Camilla was sensibly touched; and though strangely at a loss what to judge, felt her affections deeply interested.

"I dreaded," she continued, "to tell you my name, for I dreaded to sink myself into your contempt, by your knowledge of an alliance you must deem so mercenary. 'Twas folly to hope you would not hear it; yet I wished first to obtain, at least, your good will. The dear lost name of Melmond is all I love to pronounce! That name, I believe, is known to you; so may be also, perhaps, my brother's unhappy story?"

Melmond, she then said, believing Miss Lynmere betrothed to Mr. Mandlebert, had quitted Hampshire in misery, to finish
his

his vacation in Wales, with their mutual friends. There he heard that the rumour was false; and would instantly have returned and thrown himself at the feet of the young lady, by whose cousin, Mr. Lionel Tyrold, he had been told she was to inherit a large fortune; when this second report also was contradicted, and he learnt that Miss Lynmere had almost nothing: "My brother," added she, "with the true spirit of true sentiment, was but the more urgent to pursue her; but our relations interfered—and he, like me, is doomed to endless anguish!"

The accident, she said, of the preceding morning, was owing to her being engaged in reading Rowe's letters from the dead to the living; which had so infinitely enchanted her, that, desiring to peruse them without interruption, yet fearing to again wander in search of a rural retreat, she had driven to Knowle; where, hearing the noble family was absent, she had asked leave to view the park, and there had taken out her delicious book, which she was enjoying in the highest luxury of solitude and sweet air, when Lord Newford broke in upon her.

Camilla enquired if she feared any bad consequences, by telling Mr. Berlinton of his impertinence.

"Heaven

"Heaven forbid," she answered, "that I should be condemned to speak to Mr. Berlinton of any thing that concerns or befalls me ! I see him as little as I am able, and speak to him as seldom."

Camilla heard this with grief, but durst not further press a subject so delicate. They continued together till noon, and then reluctantly parted, upon a message from Mrs. Arlbery that the carriages were waiting. Mrs. Berlinton declined being introduced to that lady, which would only, she said, occasion interruptions to their future *tête-a-têtes*.

Neither the thoughtlessness of the disposition, nor the gaiety of the imagination of Camilla, could disguise from her understanding the glaring eccentricity of this conduct and character : but she saw them with more of interest than blame ; the various attractions with which they were mixed, blending in her opinion something between pity and admiration ; more captivating, though more dangerous, to the fond fancy of youth, than the most solid respect, and best founded esteem.



CHAP. VII.

The accomplished Monkies.

WHEN Camilla descended, she found Sir Sedley Clarendel and General Kinsale in attendance; and saw, from the parlour window, Miss Dannel sauntering before the house, with the newly made acquaintance of the preceding evening.

The Baronet, who was to drive Mrs. Arlbery, enquired if Camilla would not prefer, also, an open carriage. Mrs. Arlbery seconded the motion. Miss Dannel then, running to her father, exclaimed, "Pray, papa, let's take this lady I've been talking with in the coach with us. She's the good-naturedest creature I ever knew."

"Who is she? what's her name?"

"O! I don't know that, papa; but I'll go and ask her."

Flying then back, "Pray, ma'am," she cried, "what's your name? because papa wants to know."

"Why, my dear, my name's Mittin; so you may think of me when you put on your gloves."

"Papa,

"Papa, her name's Mittin," cried Miss Dennel, scampering again to her father.

"Well, and who is she?"

"O la! I'm sure I can't tell, only she's a gentlewoman."

"And how do you know that?"

"She told me so herself."

"And where does she live?"

"Just by, papa, at that house you see there."

"O! well, if she's a neighbour, that's enough. I've no more to say."

"O! then I'll ask her!" cried Miss Dennel, jumping, "dear! I'm so glad! 'twould have been so dull, only papa and I. I'm resolved, when I've a house of my own, I'll never go alone any where with papa."

This being muttered, the invitation was made and accepted, and the parties set forward.

The ride was perfectly pleasing to Camilla, now revived and chearful; Sir Sedley was free from airs; Mrs. Arlbery drew them into conversation with one another, and none of them were glad when Mr. Dennel, called "stop! or you'll drive too far."

Camilla, who concluded they were merely taking an airing, now observed she was advancing towards a crowd, and presently perceived a booth, and an immense sign

hung out from it, exhibiting a man-monkey, or ourang outang.

Though excessively fluttered, she courageously, and at once, told Mrs. Arlbery she begged to be excused proceeding.

Mrs. Arlbery, who had heard, at the play, the general objections of Mandlebert, though she had not attended to her answer, conjectured her reason for retreating, and laughed, but said she would not oppose her.

Camilla then begged to wait in Mr. Dennel's carriage, that she might keep no one else from the show. Sir Sedley, saying it would be an excruciatingly vulgar sight, proposed they should all return; she pleaded strongly against breaking up the party, but while she was handed out, to go back to the coach, the Dennels and Mrs. Mittin had alighted, and it had driven off.

The chagrin of Camilla was so palpable, that Mrs. Arlbery herself agreed to resign the scheme; and Sir Sedley, who drew up to them, said he should rejoice in being delivered from it; but Miss Dennel, who was waiting without the booth for her aunt, was ready to cry at the thought of losing the sight, which Mrs. Mittin had assured her was extremely pretty; and, after some discussion, Camilla was reduced to beg she might do no mischief, and consent to make one.

A more

A more immediate distress now occurred to her; she heard Mr. Dannel call out to the man stationed at the entrance of the booth, "What's to pay?" and recollected she had no money left.

"What your Honor pleases," was the answer, "but gentlefolks gives half-a-crown."

"I'm sure it's well worth it," said Mrs. Mittin, "for it's one of the most curious things you ever saw. You can't give less, sir." And she passed nimbly by, without paying at all: but added, "I had a ticket the first day, and now I come every day for nothing, if it don't rain, for one only need to pay at first."

Mr. Dannel and his daughter followed, and Camilla was beginning a hesitating speech to Mrs. Arlbery, as that lady, not attending to her, said to Mr. Dannel: "Well, frank me also; but take care what you pay; I'm not at all sure I shall ever return it. All I save goes to my ponies." And, handed by the General, she crossed the barrier; not hearing the voice of her young friend, which was timidly beseeching her to stop.

Camilla was now in extreme confusion. She put her hand into her pocket, took it out, felt again, and again brought forth the hand empty.

The Major, who was before her, and who watched her, begged leave to settle with the booth-keeper; but Camilla, to whom he grew daily more irksome, again preferred a short obligation to the Baronet, and blushing asked if he would once more be her banker?

Sir Sedley, by no means suspecting the necessity that urged this condescension, was surprised and delighted, and almost without knowing it himself, became all that was attentive, obliging, and pleasing.

Before they were seated, the young Ensign, Mr. Macdersey, issuing from a group of gentlemen, addressed himself to Camilla, though with an air that spoke him much discomposed and out of spirits. "I hope you are well, Miss Camilla Tyrold," he cried; "and have left all your family well? particularly the loveliest of your sex, that angel of beauty, the divine Miss Lynmere?"

"Except the company present!" said Mrs. Arlbery; "always except the company present, when you talk of beauty to women."

"I would not except even the company absent!" replied he, with warmth; but was interrupted from proceeding, by what the master of the booth called his *Consort of Musics*: in which not less than twenty
monkies

monkies contributed their part ; one dreadfully scraping a bow across the strings of a vile kit, another beating a drum, another with a fife, a fourth with a bagpipe, and the sixteen remainder striking together tongs, shovels, and pokers, by way of marrowbones and cleavers. Every body stopt their ears, though no one could forbear laughing at their various contortions, and horrible grimaces, till the master of the booth, to keep them, he said, in tune, dealt about such fierce blows with a stick, that they set up a general howling, which he called the *Vocal* part of his *Consort*, not more stunning to the ear, than offensive to all humanity. The audience applauded by loud shouts ; but Mrs. Arlbery, disgusted, rose to quit the booth. Camilla eagerly started up to second the motion, but her eyes still more expeditiously turned from the door, upon encountering those of Edgar ; who, having met the empty coach of Mr. Dannel, had not been able to refrain from inquiring where its company had been deposited ; nor, upon hearing it was at the *accomplished Monkies*, from hastening to the spot, to satisfy himself if, or not, Camilla had been steady to her declaration. And here he witnessed at once the propriety of his advice, and its failure.

The master of the booth could not endure to see the departure of the most brilliant part of his spectators, and made an harangue, promising the company, at large, if they would submit to postponing the *Consort*, in order to oblige his friends the Quality, they should have it, with the newest squalls in taste, afterwards.

The people laughed and clapped, and Mrs. Arlbery sat down.

In a few minutes, the performers were ready for a new exhibition. They were dressed up as soldiers, who, headed by a corporal, came forward to do their exercises.

Mrs. Arlbery, laughing, told the General, as he was upon duty, he should himself take the command: the General, a pleasant, yet cool and sensible man, did not laugh less; but the Ensign, more warm tempered, and wrong headed, seeing a feather in a monkey's cap, of the same colour, by chance, as in his own, fired with hasty indignation, and rising, called out to the master of the booth: "What do you mean by this, sir? do you mean to put an affront upon our corps?"

The man, startled, was going most humbly to protest his innocence of any such design; but the laugh raised against the
Ensign

Ensign amongst the audience gave him more courage, and he only simpered without speaking.

"What do you mean by grinning at me, sir?" said Macdersey; "do you want me to cane you?"

"Cane me!" cried the man enraged, "by what rights?"

Macdersey, easily put off all guard, was stepping over the benches, with his cane uplifted, when his next neighbour, tightly holding him, said, in a half whisper, "If you'll take my advice, you'd a deal better provoke him to strike the first blow."

Macdersey, far more irritated by this counsel than by the original offence, fiercely looked back, calling out, "The first blow! What do you mean by that, sir?"

"No offence, sir," answered the person, who was no other than the slow and solemn Mr. Dubster; "but only to give you a hint for your own good; for if you strike first, being in his own house, as one may say, he may take the law of you."

"The law!" repeated the fiery Ensign; "the law was made for poltroons: a man of honour does not know what it means!"

"If you talk at that rate, sir," said Dubster, in a low voice, "it may bring you into trouble."

“ And who are you, sir, that take upon you the presumption to give me your opinion ?”

“ Who am I, sir ? I am a gentleman, if you must needs know.”

“ A gentleman ! who made you so ?”

“ Who made me so ? why leaving off business ! what would you have make me so ? you may tell me if you are any better, if you come to that.”

Macdersey, of an ancient and respectable family, incensed past measure, was turning back upon Mr. Dubster ; when the General, taking him gently by the hand, begged he would recollect himself.

“ That’s very true, sir, very true, General !” cried he, profoundly bowing ; “ what you say is very true. I have no right to put myself into a passion before my superior officer, unless he puts me into it himself ; in which case ’tis his own fault. So I beg your pardon, General, with all my heart. And I’ll go out of the booth without another half syllable. But if ever I detect any of those monkies mocking us when you an’t by, I shan’t put up with it so mildly. I hope you’ll excuse me, General.”

He then bowed to him again, and begged pardon of all the ladies ; but, in quitting
the

the booth, contemptuously said to Mr Dubster: "As to you, you little dirty fellow, you a'n't worth my notice."

"Little dirty fellow!" repeated Mr. Dubster, when he was gone; "How come you to think of that? why I'm as clean as hands can make me!"

"Come, sir, come," said Mrs. Mittin, reaching over to him, and stroking his arm, "don't be angry; these things will happen, sometimes, in public companies; but gentlemen should be above minding them. He meant no harm, I dare say."

"O! as to that, ma'am," answered Mr. Dubster proudly, "I don't much care if he did or not: it's no odds to me. Only I don't know much what right he has to defame me. I wonder who he thinks he is that he may break the peace for nothing. I can't say I'm much a friend to such behaviour. Treating people with so little ceremony."

"I protest," cried Sir Sedley to Camilla, "'tis your favourite swain from the Northwick assembly I waisted on some zephyr of Hope, he has pursued you to Tunbridge. I flatter myself he has brought his last brand new cloaths to claim your fair hand at the master of the ceremonies' ball."

"Hush! hush!" cried Camilla, in a low voice; "he will take you literally should he hear you!"

Mr. Dubster, now perceiving her, bowed low from the place where he stood, and called out, "How do you do, ma'am? I ask pardon for not speaking to you before; but I can't say as I see you."

Camilla was forced to bow, though she made no answer. But he continued with his usual steadiness; "Why, that was but a unked morning we was together so long, ma'am, in my new summer-house. We was in fine jeopardy, that's the truth of it. Pray, how does the young gentleman do as took away our ladder?"

"What a delectable acquaintance!" cried Sir Sedley; "would you have the cruelty to keep such a treasure to yourself? present me, I supplicate!"

"O! I know you well enough, sir," said Mr. Dubster, who overheard him; "I see you at the hop at the White Hart; and I believe you know me pretty well too, sir, if I may take account by your staring. Not that I mind it in the least."

"Come, come, don't be touchy," said Mrs. Mittin; "can't you be good-natured, and hold your tongue? what signifies taking things amiss? It only breeds ill words."

"That's very sensibly observed upon!" said Mr. Dannel; "I don't know when I've heard any thing more sensibly said."

"O! as to that, I don't take it amiss in the least," cried Mr. Dubster; "if the gentleman's

gentleman's a mind to stare, let him stare. Only I should like to know what it's for. It's no better than child's play, as one may say, making one look foolish for nothing."

The ourang outang was now announced, and Mrs. Arlbery immediately left the booth, accompanied by her party, and followed by Edgar.

Neither of the carriages were in waiting, but they would not return to the booth. Sir Sedley, to whom standing was still rather inconvenient, begged a cast in the carriage of a friend, who was accidentally passing by.

Macdersey, who joined them, said he had been considering what that fellow had proposed to him, of taking the first blow, and found he could not put up with it: and upon the appearance of Mr. Dubster, who in quitting the booth was preparing, with his usual leisurely solemnity, to approach Camilla, darted forward, and seizing him by the collar, exclaimed, "Retract, sir! Retract!"

Mr. Dubster stared, at first, without speech or opposition; but being released by the Major, whom the General begged to interfere, he angrily said, "Pray, sir, what business have you to take hold of a body in such a manner as that? It's an assault, sir, and so I can prove. And I'm glad

glad of it; for now I can serve you as I did another gentleman once before, that I smarted out of a good ten pound out of his pocket, for a knock he gave me, for a mere nothing, just like this here pulling one by the collar, nobody knows why.

The Major, endeavouring to quiet Macdersey, advised him to despise so low a person.

"So I will, my dear friend," he returned, "as soon as ever I have given him the proper chastisement for his ignorance. But I must do that first. You won't take it ill, Major."

"I believe," cried Mr. Dubster, holding up both his hands, "the like of this was never heard of! Here's a gentleman, as he calls himself, ready to take away my life, with his own good will, for nothing but giving him a little bit of advice! However, it's all one to me. The law is open to all. And if any one plays their tricks upon me, they shall pay for their fun. I'm none of your tame ones to put up with such a thing for nothing. I'm above that, I promise you."

"Don't talk, sir! don't talk!" cried Macdersey; "it's a thing I can't bear from a mean person, to be talked to. I had a hundred thousand times rather stand to be shot at."

“ Not talk, fir ? I should be glad to know what right you has to hind-r me, provided I say nothing against the law ? And as to being a mean person, it's more than you can prove, for I'm sure you don't know who I am, nor nothing about me. I may be a lord, for any thing you know, though I don't pretend to say I am. But as to what people take me for, that behave so out of character, it's what I sha'n't trouble my head about. They may take me for a chimney-sweeper, or they may take me for a duke ; which they like. I sha'n't tell them whether I'm one or t'other, or whether I'm neither. And as to not talking, I shall hold my tongue when I think proper.”

“ Ask my pardon this instant, fellow !” cried the Ensign, whom the Major, at the motion of the General, now caught by the arm, and hurried from the spot : Mrs. Mittin, at the same moment pulling away Mr. Dubster, and notably expounding to him the advantages of patience and good humour.

Mrs. Arlbery, wearied both of this squabble and of waiting, took the arm of the General, and said she would walk home ; Miss Dannel lovingly held by Mrs. Mittin, with whom her father also assorted, and by whom Mr. Dubster was drawn on.

Camilla

Camilla alone had no immediate companion, as the Major was occupied by the Ensign. Edgar saw her disengaged. He trembled, he wavered; he wished the Major back; he wished him still more at a distance too remote ever to return; he thought he would instantly mount his horse, and gallop towards Beech Park; but the horse was not ready, and Camilla was in sight;—and, in less than a minute, he found himself, scarcely knowing how, at her side.

Camilla felt a pleasure that bounded to her heart, though the late assertions of Mrs. Arlbery prepared her to expect him. He knew not, however, what to say; he felt mortified and disappointed, and when he had uttered something hardly intelligible about the weather, he walked on in silence.

Camilla, whose present train of thoughts had no discordant tendency, broke through this strangeness herself, and said, “How frivolous I must appear to you! but indeed I was at the very door of the booth, before I knew whither the party was going.”

“You did not, I hope, at least,” he cried, “when you had entered it, deem me too rigid, too austere, that I thought the species, both of company and of entertainment, ill calculated for a young lady?”

“Rigid!

“ Rigid ! austere ! ” repeated she ; “ I never thought you either ! never—and if once again— ” she stopt ; embarrassed, ashamed.

“ If once again what ? ” cried he in a tremulous voice ; “ what would Miss Camilla say ?—would she again—Is there yet—What would Miss Camilla say ? ”

Camilla felt confounded, both with the ideas of what he meant to allude to, and what construction he had put upon her half finished sentence. Impatient, however, to clear that, “ If once more, ” she cried, “ you could prevail with yourself—now and then—from time to time—to give me an hint, an idea—of what you think right—I will promise, if not a constant observance, at least a never-failing sense of your kindness. ”

The revulsion in the heart, in the whole frame of Edgar, was almost too powerful for restraint : he panted for an immediate explanation of every past and every present difficulty, and a final avowal that she was either self-destined to the Major, or that he had no rival to fear : But before he could make any answer, a sudden and violent shower broke up the conference, and grouped the whole party under a large tree.

This interruption, however, had no power upon their thoughts ; neither of them heard
a word

a word that was saying ; each ruminated intently, though confusedly, upon what already was passed. Yet where the wind precipitated the rain, Edgar stationed himself, and held his hat to intercept its passage to Camilla ; and as her eye involuntarily was caught by the shower that pattered upon his head and shoulders, she insensibly pressed nearer to the trunk of the tree, to afford more shelter to him from its branches.

The rest of the party partook not of this taciturnity : Mr. Dubster, staring Mrs. Mittin full in the face, exclaimed, “ I think I ought to know you, ma’am, asking your pardon ? ”

“ No matter for that ! ” cried she, turning with quickness to Camilla ; “ Lord, miss—I don’t know your name,—how your poor hat is all I don’t know how ! as limp and as flimzy as if it had been in a wash-tub ! ”

“ I’ve just bethought me,” continued he, “ where it was we used to see one another, and all the whole manner of it. I’ve got it as clear in my head as if it was but yesterday. Don’t you remember—”

“ Can’t you stand a little out, there ? ” interrupted she ; “ what signifies a man’s old coat ? don’t you see how you let all the rain come upon this young lady ? you should

should never think of yourself, but only of what you can do to be obliging."

"A very good rule, that! A very good one indeed!" said Mr. Dannel; "I wish every body would mind it."

"I'm as willing to mind it, I believe," said Mr. Dubster, "as my neighbours; but as to being wet through, for mere complaisance, I don't think it fair to expect such a thing of nobody. Besides, this is not such an old coat as you may think for. If you was to see what I wear at home, I promise you would not think so bad of it. I don't say it's my best; who'd be fool then to wear it every day? However, I believe it's pretty nigh as good as that I had on that night I saw you at Mrs. Purdle's, when, you know, one of your pattens—"

"Come, come, what's the man talking about? one person should not take all the conversation up so. Dear miss—do tell me your name?—I'm so sorry for your hat, I can't but think of it; it looks as dingy!—"

"Why, now, you won't make me believe," said Mr. Dubster, "you've forgot how your patten broke; and how I squeezed my finger under the iron? And how I'd like to have lost the use of it? There
would

would have been a fine job! And how Mrs. Purdle—”

“I’m sure the shower’s over,” cried Mrs. Mittin, “and if we stay here, we shall have all the droppings of the leaves upon us. Poor miss thing-o-me’s hat is spoilt already. There’s no need to make it worse.”

“And how Mrs. Purdle,” he continued, “was obliged to lend you a pair of shoes and stockings, because you was wet through your feet? And how they would not fit you, and kept tumbling off? And how, when somebody come to fetch you in their own coach, you made us say you was taken ill, because you was so daubed with mud and mire, you was ashamed to shew yourself? And how—”

“I can’t think what you are talking of,” said Mrs. Mittin; “but come, let’s you and I go a little way on, to see if the rain’s over.” She then went some paces from the tree, and said, “What signifies running on so, Mr. Dubster, about things nobody knows any thing of? It’s tiring all the company to death. You should never talk about your own fingers, and hazards, to genteel people. You should only talk about agreeable subjects as I do. See how they all ~~like~~ me! That gentleman

man brought me to the monkies in his own coach."

"As to that," answered he, gravely, "I did not mean, in the least, to say any thing disagreeable; only I thought it odd you should not seem to know me again, considering Mrs. Purdle used——"

"Why you've no nous, Mr. Dubster; Mrs. Purdle's a very good sort of woman and the best friend I have in the world, perhaps, at the bottom; but she i'n't a sort of person to talk of before gentlefolks. You should talk to great people about their own affairs, and what you can do to please them, and find out how you can serve them, if you'd be treated genteelly by them, as I am. Why, I go every where, and see every thing, and it costs me nothing. A friend, a lady of great fashion, took me one day to the monkies, and paid for me; and I've gone since, whenever I will, for nothing."

The shower was now over, and the party proceeded.

Edgar, uncertain, irresolute, walked on in silence: yet attentive, assiduous, even tenderly watchful to guide, guard, and assist his fair companion in her way. The name of the Major trembled perpetually upon his lips; but fear what might be the result of his inquiries stopt his speech till they approached the house; when he commanded

manded voice to say : " You permit, then, the renewal of my old privilege?—"

" Permit! I wish for it !"

They were now at the door : Edgar, not daring to speak again to Camilla, and not able to address any one else, took his leave; enchanted that he was authorized, once more, to inform himself with openness of the state of her affairs, and of her conduct. And Camilla, dwelling with delight upon the discernment of Mrs. Arlbery, blest the happy penetration that had endowed her with courage to speak again to Edgar in terms of friendship and confidence.

Mrs. Mittin, declaring she could not eat till she had seen what could be done for the hat of Miss Tyrold, accompanied her up stairs, took it off herself, and tried to new arrange it; and, at last, failing to succeed, insisted upon taking it home, to put it in order, and promised to return it in the morning time enough for the Pantiles. Camilla was much ashamed; but she had no means to buy another, and she now lost her indifference to going abroad. She thought, therefore, this new acquaintance at least as useful as she was officious, and accepted her civility with thanks..

CHAP. VIII.

The Rooms.

THE evening was destined to the Rooms:

The first object Camilla perceived upon her entrance was Edgar, and the smile with which she met his eye brought him instantly to her side. That smile was not less radiant for his nearer approach; nor was his pleasure in it less animated for observing that Major Cerwood was not of her party, nor as yet in the room. The opportunity seemed inviting to engage her himself; to suggest and find it irresistible was the same thing, and he inquired if her whole evening were arranged, or she would go down two dances with an old friend.

The softness of her assent was even exquisite delight to him; and, as they walked up and down the apartment, though he addressed her but little, and though she spoke but in answer, every word he uttered she received as couching some gentle meaning, and every syllable she replied, he thought conveyed something of flattering interest:
and

and although all was upon open and unavoidable subjects, he had no eyes but for her, she had no attention but for him.

This quiet, yet heart-felt intercourse, was soon a little interrupted by the appearance of a large and striking party, led on by Lady Alithea Selmore; for which every body made way, to which every body turned, and which, passing by all the company without seeming conscious there was any to pass, formed a mass at the upper end of the room, with an air and manner of such exclusive attention to their chief, or to one another, that common observation would have concluded some film before their eyes obstructed their discerning that they were not the sole engrossers of the apartment.

But such was not the judgment formed of them by Mrs. Arlbery, who, forced by the stream to give them passage, paid herself for the condescension by a commentary upon the passengers. "Those good people," said she, "strive to make us believe we are nothing to them. They strive even to believe it themselves. But this is the mere semblance worn by pride and affectation, to veil internal fatigue. They come hither to recruit their exhausted powers, not, indeed, by joining in our society, but by a view of new objects for their senses,
and

and the flattering idea, for their minds, of the envy or admiration they excite. They are all people of some consequence, and many of them are people of title : but these are far the most supportable of the group ; their privileged superiority over the rest is so marked and indisputable, that they are saved the trouble either of claiming or ascertaining it : but those who approach their rank without reaching it, live in a constant struggle to make known their importance. Indeed, I have often seen that people of title are less gratified with the sound of their own honours, than people of, no title in pronouncing them."

Sir Sedley Clarendel was of this set. Like the rest he passed Mrs. Arlbery without seeming to notice her, and was passing Camilla in the same manner ; but not aware this was only to be fine, like the party to which he belonged, she very innocently spoke to him herself, to hope he felt no further ill effect from his accident.

Sir Sedley, though internally much gratified by this interest for his safety, which in Camilla was the result of having herself endangered it, looked as if he hardly recollected her, and making hastily a kind of half bow, walked on with his company.

Camilla, who had no view, nor one serious thought concerning him, was rather

amused than displeased by his caprices; and was preparing to relate the history of his lameness to Edgar, who seemed surprised and even hurt by her addressing him, and by his so slightly passing her, when the entrance of another splendid party interrupted all discourse.

And here, to her utter amazement, she beheld as chief of the group, her romantic new friend; not leading, indeed, like Lady Althea Selmore, a train, but surrounded by admirers, who, seeking no eye but hers, seemed dim and humble planets, moving round a radiant sun.

Camilla now, forgetting Sir Sedley, would have taken this moment to narrate her adventure with Mrs. Berlinton, had not her design been defeated by the approach of the Major. He belonged to this last group, but was the only one that separated from it. He spoke to Camilla with his usual air of devotion, told her he had dined with Mrs. Berlinton, to whose husband, whom he had taken for her grandfather, he had been just introduced; and begged to know of Mrs. Arlbery if he might have the pleasure of bringing them all acquainted; an offer which Camilla, unauthorized by Mrs. Berlinton, had not ventured to make. Mrs. Arlbery declined the proposal: not anxious to mix where she had small chance of presiding.

The

The party, after traversing the room, took full and exclusive possession of a considerable spot just below that occupied by Lady Alitheia.

These two companies completely engrossed all attention, amply supplying the rest of the assembly with topics for discourse. The set with Lady Alitheia Selmore was, in general, haughty, supercilious, and taciturn; looking around with eyes determined to see neither any person nor any thing before them, and rarely speaking, except to applaud what fell from her ladyship; who far less proud, because a lover of popularity, deigned herself, from time to time, a slight glance at the company, to see if she was observed, and to enjoy its reverence.

The set to which Mrs. Berlinton was the loadstone, was far more attractive to the disciples of nature, though less sedulously sought by those whom the manners and maxims of the common world had sophisticated. Every one was gay, elegant, and desirous to please because internally pleased; and though some of them harboured designs deeper and more dangerous than any formed by the votaries of rank, they appeared to have nothing more in view than to decorate with flowers the present moment.

ment. The magnetic influence of beauty was, however, more powerful than that of the *ton*; for though Mrs. Berlinton, from time to time, allured a beau from Lady Alitheia Selmore, her ladyship, during the whole season, had not one retaliation to boast. But, on the other hand, the females, in general, strove to cluster about Lady Alitheia; Mrs. Berlinton leaving them no greater chance of rivalry in charms than in conversation.

Edgar had made way upon the approach of the Major, who wore an air of superior claim extremely unpleasant to him; but, since already engaged to Camilla, he meant to return to her when the dancing began.

She concluded he left her but to speak to some acquaintance, and was, herself, amply occupied in observing her new friend. The light in which she now beheld her, admired, pursued, and adulated, elegantly adorned in her person, and evidently with but one rival for fame and fashion in Tunbridge, filled her with astonishment. Nothing could less assort with her passion for solitude, her fondness for literary and sentimental discussions, and her enthusiasm in friendship. But her surprise was mixed with praise and admiration, when she reflected upon the soft humility
and

and caressing sweetness of her manners, yet found her, by general consent, holding this elevated rank in society.

The Major earnestly pressed to conduct Camilla to this coterie, assuring her Mrs. Berlinton would not have passed, had she seen her, for, during dinner, and at coffee, she had talked of nobody else. Camilla heard this with pleasure, but shrunk from all advances, and strove rather to hide than shew herself, that Mrs. Berlinton might have full liberty either to seek or avoid her. She wished to consult Edgar upon this acquaintance; though the present splendour of her appearance, and the number of her followers, made her fear she could never induce him to do justice to the sweetness and endearment of her social powers.

When the Major found he pleaded in vain, he said he would at least let Mrs. Berlinton know where to look for her; and went himself to that lady.

Edgar, who had felt sensibly mortified to observe, when he retreated, that the eyes and attention of Camilla had been wholly bestowed upon what he considered merely as a new scene, was now coming forward; when he saw Mrs. Berlinton hastily rise, suddenly break from all her adulators, and, with quick steps and animated gestures,

traverse the apartment, to address Camilla, whom, taking by both her hands, which she pressed to her heart, she conjured, in the most flattering terms, to accompany her back.

Camilla was much gratified; yet, from delicacy to Mrs. Arlbery, stimulated by the fear of missing her expected partner in the country dances, declined the invitation: Mrs. Berlington looked disappointed; but said she would not be importunate, and returned alone.

Mrs. Arlbery now made an abrupt declaration, that the Rooms were insufferable, and that she would immediately go home. She then gave her hand to the General, and Miss Dannel took the arm of Camilla, murmuring, that she would never leave the Rooms at such an early hour again, when once she was married.

To quit Edgar thus, at the very moment of renewed intercourse and amity, seemed too cruel; and Camilla, though with blushes, and stammering, whispered Mrs. Arlbery, "What can I do, ma'am? most unfortunately I have engaged myself to dance?"

"With whom?"

"With—Mr.—Mandlebert."

"O! vastly well! Stay then by all means: but, as he has not engaged me too, allow me, I beseech you, to escape."

Mrs.

Mrs. Berlington will, I am sure, be happy to take care of you."

She then told the Major to make the proposal to Mrs. Berlington; who had no sooner heard it, than her soft and lovely form was again at the side of Camilla, with whom, smiling and delighted, she walked back, arm in arm, to her place.

Mrs. Arlbery and the General, and Mr. and Miss Dannel, now left the room.

Edgar viewed all this with amazement. He found that the young lady she joined was as fashionable as she was beautiful; but could not fathom how so great an intimacy had so suddenly been formed.

Camilla, thus distinguished, became now herself an object of peculiar notice; her own personal claim to particular attention, her dejection had forfeited, for it had robbed her eyes of their animation, and her countenance of its play; but no contagion spreads with greater certainty nor greater speed than that of fashion; slander itself is not more sure of promulgation. She was now looked at by all present as if seen for the first time; every one discovered in her some charm, some grace, some excellence; those who, the minute before, had passed her with perfect indifference, said it was impossible to see and not be struck with her;

her; and all agreed she could appear upon no spot under the sun, and not instinctively be singled out, as formed to shine in the highest sphere.

But he by whom this transaction was observed with most pleasure, was Sir Sedley Clarendel. The extraordinary service he had performed for Camilla, and the grateful interest she had shewn him in return, had led him to consider her with an attention so favourable, that, without half her merit, or half her beauty, she could not have failed rising in his estimation, and exciting his regard: and she had now a superior charm that distanced every other; she had been asked to dance, yet refused it, by a man of celebrity in the *ton*; and she was publicly sought and caressed by the only rival at Tunbridge, in that species of renown, to Lady Alithea Selmore.

He felt an increased desire to be presented to Mrs. Berlinton himself; and, gliding from his own circle as quietly as he could contrive, not to offend Lady Alithea, who, though she laughed at *the little Welsh rustic*, was watchful of her votaries, and jealous of her rising power, came gently behind Lord O'Lerney and whispered his request.

He was received by the young beauty with that grace, and that sweetness which rendered

rendered her so generally bewitching, yet with an air that proved her already accustomed to admiration, and untouched by its intoxicating qualities. All that was voluntary of her attention was bestowed exclusively upon Camilla, though, when addressed and called upon by others, she answered without impatience, and looked without displeasure.

This conduct, at the same time that it shewed her in a point of view the most amiable, raised Camilla higher and higher in the eyes of the bye-standers: and, in a few minutes more, the general cry throughout the assembly was, to inquire who was the young lady thus brought forward by Mrs. Berlington.

Edgar heard this with increased anxiety. Has she discretion, has she fortitude, thought he, to withstand public distinction? Will it not spoil her for private life; estrange her from family concerns? render tasteless and insipid the conjugal and maternal characters, meant by Nature to form not only the most sacred of female duties, but the most delicious of enjoyments?

Very soon after, this anxiety was tinged with a feeling more severe; he saw her spoken to negligently by Sir Sedley; he required, after what he had already him-

self deemed impertinence from the Baronet, that she should have assumed to him a distant dignity; but he perceived on the contrary, that she answered him with pleasant alacrity, and, when not engaged by Mrs. Berlington, attended to him, even with distinction.

Alas! thought he, the degradation from the true female character is already begun! already the lure of fashion draws her from what she owes to delicacy and propriety, to give a willing reception to insolence and foppery!

Camilla, meanwhile, unsuspecting of his remarks, and persuaded every civility in her power was due to Sir Sedley, was gay, pleased, and pleasing; happy to consider herself under the guidance, and restored to the amity of Edgar, and determined to acquaint him with all her affairs, and consult him upon all her proceedings.

The dancing, for which mutually they languished, as the mutual means of reunion, seemed not to be the humour of the evening, and those who were ready for it, were not of sufficient consequence to bring it forward. But when Mrs. Berlington mentioned, that she had been taking some lessons in a cotillon, a universal cry was raised by all her party, to try one immediately. She pleaded in vain her inexperience

perience in such dances ; they insisted there was nobody present that could criticise, that her form alone would compensate for every mistake of rule, and that the best lesson was easy practice.

She was soon gained, for she was not addicted to denials ; but the application which ensued to Camilla was acceded to less promptly. As there were but two other ladies in the circle of Mrs. Berlinton, her assistance was declared to be indispensable. She pleaded inability of every sort, though to dance without Edgar was her only real objection ; for she had no false shame in being ignorant of what she never had learnt. But Mrs. Berlinton protested she would not rise if she were the only novice to be exhibited ; and the Major then prepared to prostrate himself at the feet of Camilla ; who, hastily, and ashamed, stood up, to prevent an action that Edgar might misinterpret.

Hoping, however, now, to at least draw him into their set, she ventured to acknowledge to Mrs. Berlinton, that she was already engaged, in case she danced.

The Major, who heard her, and who knew it was not to himself, strenuously declared this could only be for country dances, and therefore would not interfere with a cotillon.

"Will country dances, then," said she, blushing, "follow?"

"Certainly, if any one has spirit to begin them."

The cotillon was now played, and the preceding bow from the opposite Major forced her courtship in return.

The little skill in this dance of one of the performers, and the total want of it in another, made it a mere pleasantry to all; though the youth and beauty of the two who did the worst, rendered them objects of admiration, that left nearly unnoticed those who did best.

To Camilla what belonged to pleasantry in this business was of short duration. When the cotillon was over, she saw nothing of Edgar. She looked around, mortified, disappointed. No one called for a country dance; and the few who had wished for it, concluding all chance over when a cotillon was begun, had now retired, or given it up.

Yet what was this disappointment, compared with the sufferings of Edgar? Something of a contest, and of entreaties, had reached his ears, while he had hovered near the party, or strolled up and down the room. He had gathered the subject was dancing, and he saw the Major most earnest with Camilla. He was sure it was

for her hand, and concluded it was for a country dance; but could she forfeit her engagement? were matters so far advanced, as to make her so openly shew him all prevailing, all powerful, not only over all rivals, but, according to the world's established customs upon these occasions, over all decorum?

Presently, he saw the Major half kneel; he saw her rise to prevent the prostration; and he heard the dance called.

He could bear no more; pain intolerable seized, distracted him, and he abruptly quitted the ball-room, lest the Major should approach him with some happy apology, which he was unfitted to receive.

He could only settle his ideas by supposing she really loved Major Cerwood, and had suffered her character to be infected by the indelicacy that made a part of his own.

His first impulse was to set off instantly from Tunbridge; but his second thoughts represented the confession this would make; he resolved, therefore, to try to meet with her the next day, and to speak to her with the amity they had so lately arranged, yet in a way that should manifest him wholly free from all personal interest or view.

CHAP. IX.

Ways to the Heart.

ALL pleasure to Camilla was completely over from the moment that Edgar disappeared.

When she returned to Mount Pleasant, Mrs. Arlbery, whom she found alone, said, "Did I not understand that you were going to dance with Mr. Mandlebert? How chanced he to leave you? We were kept ages waiting for the coach; and I saw him pass by, and walk off."

Camilla, colouring, related the history of the cotillon; and said, she feared, not knowing how she had been circumstanced, he was displeased.

"Displeased!" cried Mrs. Arlbery, laughing: "and do you, at seventeen, suffer a man to be displeased? How can you do worse when you are fifty? Know your own power more truly, and use it better. Men, my dear, are all spoilt by humility, and all conquered by gaiety. Amuse and defy them!—attend to that maxim,

maxim, and you will have the world at your feet."

"I have no such ambition;—but I should be sensibly hurt to make an old friend think ill of me."

"When an old friend," said Mrs. Arlbery, archly, "happens to be a young man, you must conduct yourself with him a little like what you are; that is, a young woman. And a young woman is never in her proper place, if such sort of old friends are not taught to know their own. From the instant you permit them to think of being offended, they become your masters; and you will find it vastly more convenient to make them your slaves."

Camilla pretended to understand this in a mere general sense, and wished her good night.

* * * *

The next morning, at an early hour, her chamber door was opened with great suddenness, and no preparation, and Mrs. Mit-tin tript nimbly into the room, with a hat in her hand.

"Look here! my dear Miss Tyrold," cried she, "for now that other young lady has told me your name; look at your hat now! I declare nobody would know it!"

Miss

Miss Donnel says it's as pretty again as it was at first."

Camilla expressed her shame to have caused her so much trouble.

"O! my dear, it's none at all! I got all the things at Mrs. Tilden's."

"Who is Mrs. Tilden?" cried Camilla, staring.

"Why the milliner. Don't you know that?"

"What things?" asked Camilla.

"Why these, my dear; don't you see? Why it's all new, except just the hat itself, and the feathers."

Camilla was now in extreme embarrassment. She had concluded Mrs. Mittin had only newly arranged the ornaments, and had not the smallest idea of incurring a debt which she had no means to discharge.

"It all comes to quite a trifle," continued Mrs. Mittin, "for all it's so pretty. Mrs. Tilden's things are all monstrous cheap. I get things for next to nothing from her, sometimes, when they are a little past the mode. But then I recommend her a heap of customers. I get all my friends, by hook or by crook, to go to her shop."

"And what," stammered out Camilla, "besides my thanks, do I owe you?"

"Oh,

"Oh, nothing. She would not be paid; she said, as you was her customer, and had all your things of her at first, she'd put it down in your bill for the season."

This was, at least, some respite; though Camilla felt the disagreeable necessity of increasing her intended demand upon Mrs. Arlbery.

Miss Dannel came with a summons from that lady to the Pantiles, whither, as the day was fine, she proposed they should walk.

"O!" cried Mrs. Mittin, "if you are going upon the Pantiles, you must go to that shop where there's the curious ear-rings that are to be raffled for. You'll put in to be sure."

Camilla said no, with a sigh attributed to the ear-rings, but due to a tender recollection of the raffle in which Edgar had procured her the trinket she most valued. Mrs. Mittin proposed accompanying them, and asked Camilla to introduce her to Mrs. Arlbery. This was very disagreeable; but she knew not how, after the civility she owed her, to refuse.

Mrs. Arlbery received her with much surprize, but perfect unconcern; conscious of her own importance, she feared no disgrace from being seen with one in a lower station;

station; and she conceived it no honour to appear with one in a higher.

When they came to the Pantiles, Mrs. Mittin begged to introduce them to a view of the ear-rings, which belonged, she said, to one of her particular friends; and as Mrs. Arlbery caught the eye of Sir Sedley Clarendel in passing the window, she entered the shop.

"Well," cried Mrs. Mittin, to its master, "don't say I bring you no company. I am sure you ought to let me throw for nothing, if it's only for good luck; for I am sure these three ladies will all put in. Come, Miss Dannel, do lead the way. 'Tis but half a guinea, and only look what a prize."

"Ask papa to pay for me!" cried Miss Dannel.

"Come, good sir, come, put down the half guinea for the young lady. I'm sure you can't refuse her. Lord! what's half a guinea?"

"That's a very bad way of reasoning," answered Mr. Dannel; "and what I did not expect from a woman of your sense."

"Why you don't think, sir, I meant that half a guinea's a trifle? - I know what money is better than that. I only mean half a guinea is nothing in comparison to
ten

ten guineas, which is the price of the earrings; and so that makes me think it's pity the young lady should lose an opportunity of getting them so cheap. I'm sure if they were dear, I should be the last to recommend them, for I think extravagance the greatest sin under the sun."

"Well, now you speak like the sensible woman I took you for."

A very little more eloquence of this sort was necessary, before Mr. Dennel put down half a guinea.

"Well, I declare," cried Mrs. Mittin, "there's only three more names wanted; and when these two ladies have put in, there will be only one! I'm sure if I was rich enough, that one would not be far off. But come, ma'am, where's your half guinea? Come, Miss Tyrold, don't hold back; who knows but you may win? there's only nineteen against you. Lord! what's that?"

Camilla turned away, and Mrs. Arlbery did not listen to a word; but when Sir Sedley said, "They are really very pretty; won't you throw?" she answered, "I must rather make raffle with my own trinkets, than raffle for other people's. Think of my ponies! However, I'll put in, if Mr. Dennel will be my paymaster."

Mr. Dennel, turning short off, walked out of the shop.

"This

"This is a bad omen!" cried she, laughing; and then desired to look at the list of rafflers; when seeing amongst the names those of Lady Alithea Selmore and the Hon. Mrs. Berlinton, she exclaimed: "'Tis a coalition of all fashion and reputation! We shall be absolutely scouted, my dear Miss Tyrold, if we shrink. My poor ponies must wait half a guinea longer! Let us put in together."

Camilla answered, she had no intention to try for them.

"Well, then, lend me half a guinea; for I never trust myself, now, with my purse."

"I have not a half guinea—I have—I have no—gold—in my purse," answered Camilla, with a face deeply tinged with red.

Major Cerwood, who joined the party during this discussion, intreated to be banker for both the ladies. Camilla positively refused any share; but Mrs. Mittin said it would be a shame for such a young lady to go without her chance, and wrote her name next to that of Mrs. Arlbery; while the Major, without further question, put down a guinea upon the counter.

Camilla could not endure this; yet from a youthful shame of confessing poverty, forced herself to the ear of Mrs. Arlbery, and

and whispered an intreaty that she would pay the guinea herself.

Mrs. Arlbery, surprized, answered she had really come out without her purse; but seeing her seriously vexed, added, "If you do not approve of the Major for a banker till we go home, what say you to Sir Sedley?"

"I shall prefer him a thousand times!"

Mrs. Arlbery, in a low voice, repeated this to the young Baronet, and receiving his guinea, threw it down; making the Major, without the smallest excuse or ceremony, take back his own.

This was by no means lost upon Sir Sedley; he felt flattered—he felt softened; he thought Camilla looked unusually lovely; he began to wonder at the coldness of Mandlebert, and to lament that the first affections of so fair a creature should be cast away.

Mandlebert himself was an object of nothing less than envy. He had entered the shop during the contest about the raffle, and seen Major Cerwood pay for Camilla as well as for Mrs. Arlbery. Confirmed in his notions of her positive engagement, and sick at heart from the confirmation, he walked further into the shop, upon pretence of looking at some other articles, before

fore he could assume sufficient composure to speak to her.

Mrs. Mittin now began woefully to repine that she could not take the last share for the ear-rings; and, addressing herself to Mr. Dennel, who re-entered as soon as he saw the money was paid for Mrs. Arlbery, she said, "You see, sir, if there was somebody ready to take the last chance at once, this gentleman might fix a day for the throwing immediately; but else, it may be dawdled on, nobody knows how long; for one will be gone, and t'other will be gone, and there'll be no getting the people together; and all the pleasure of the thing is being here to throw for one's self: for I don't much like trusting money matters out of sight."

"If I'd thought of all that," said Mr. Dennel, "I should not have put in."

"True, sir. But here, if it was not that I don't happen to have half a guinea to spare just now, how nicely it might all be finished in a trice! For, as I have been saying to Miss Dennel, this may turn out a real bargain; for they'll fetch their full value at any time. And I tell Miss Dennel that's the only way to lay out money, upon things that will bring it back again if it's wanted; not upon frippery froppery, that's spoilt

spoilt in a minute, and then i'n't worth a farthing."

"Very sensibly said," cried Mr. Denzel; "I'm sure she can't hear better advice; I'm much obliged to you for putting such sensible thoughts into her head." And then, hoping she would continue her good lessons to his daughter, he drew out his purse, and begged her to accept a chance from it for the prize.

Mrs. Mittin was in raptures; and the following week was settled for the raffle.

Mrs. Arlbery, who had attended to this scene with much amusement, now said to General Kinsale, who had taken a seat by her, "Did I not tell you well, General, that all men are at the disposition of women? If even the shrewd monied man cannot resist flattery, what heart shall we find impenetrable? The connoisseur in human characters knows, that the pursuit of wealth is the petrification of tenderness: yet yonder is my good brother-in-law, who thinks cash and existence one, allured even to squander money, merely by the address of that woman—in allowing that money should be the first study of life! Let even Clarendel have a care of himself! or, when least he suspects any danger, some fair dairy-maid will praise his horsemanship, or take a fancy

a fancy to his favourite spaniel, or any other favourite that happens to be the foible of the day, and his invulnerability will be at her feet, and Lady Clarendel be brought forward in a fortnight."

Lord O'Lerney now entered the shop, accompanying a lady whose countenance and appearance were singularly pleasing, and who, having made some purchase, was quietly retiring, when the master of the shop inquired if she wished to look at the ear-rings; adding, that though the number was full, he knew of one person who would give up her chance, in case it would oblige a customer.

She answered she had no present occasion for ear-rings, and would not take up either his time or her own unnecessarily; and then walked gently away, still attended by Lord O'Lerney.

"Bless me!" cried Mrs. Arlbery, "who is that? to hear a little plain common sense is so rare, it strikes one more than wit."

"It's Lady Isabella Irby, madam," answered the master of the shop.

Here Lord O'Lerney, who had only handed her to her carriage, returned.

"My lord," cried Mrs. Arlbery, "do you know what a curiosity you brought amongst us just now? A woman of rank
who

who looks round upon other people just as if she thought they were her fellow-creatures?"

"Fie, fie!" answered Lord O'Lerney, laughing, "why will you suppose that so rare? If we have not as many women who are amiable with titles as without, it is only because we have not the same number from which to select them. They are spoilt or unspoilt but in the same proportion as the rest of their sex. Their fall, or their escape, is less local than you imagine; it does not depend upon their titles, but upon their understandings."

"Well, my lord, I believe you are right. I was adopting a narrow prejudice, merely from indolence of thought."

"But why, my lord," cried Sir Sedley, "does this paragon of a divinity deny her example to the world? Is it in contempt of our incorrigibility? or in horror of our contagion?"

"My dear Sir Sedley," said Mrs. Arlbery, "don't flatter yourself with being so dangerous! Her ladyship does not fly you from fear, take my word for it. There is nothing in her air that looks as if she could only be good by being shut up. I dare believe she might meet you every day, yet be mistress of herself! Nevertheless,

why, my lord, is she such a recluse? Why does one never see her in public."

"Never see her in public? my dear madam! she appears very often; only being unintruding, she is unnoticed."

"The satire, then, my lord," said Mrs. Arlbery, "falls upon the company. Why is she not surrounded by volunteer admirers? Why, with a person and manner so formed to charm, joined to such a character, and such rank, has she not her train?"

"The reason, my dear madam, you could define with more sagacity than myself; she must be sought! And the world is so lazy, that the most easy of access, however valueless, is preferred to the most perfect, who must be pursued with any trouble."

Admirable Lord O'Lerney! thought Edgar; what a lesson is this to youthful females against the glare of public homage, the false brilliancy of unfeminine popularity!

This conversation, however, which alone of any he had heard at Tunbridge promised him any pleasure, was interrupted by Mr. Dennel, who said the dinner would be spoilt, if they did not all go home.

Camilla felt extremely vexed to quit the shop, without clearing up the history of the

the dance ; and Edgar, seeing the persevering Major at her side as she departed, in urgency to put any species of period to his own sufferings, followed the party, and precipitately began a discourse with Lord O'Lerney upon making the tour of Europe. Camilla, for whom it was designed, intent upon planning her own defence, heard nothing that was said, till Lord O'Lerney asked him if his route would be through Switzerland, and he answered, " My route is not quite fixed, my lord."

Startled, she now listened, and Mrs. Arlbery, whom she held by the arm, was equally surprised, and looked to see how she bore this intimation.

" If you will walk with me to my lodgings," replied Lord O'Lerney, " I will shew you my own route, which may perhaps save you some difficulties. Shall you set out soon?"

" I fancy within a month," answered Edgar ; and, arm in arm, they walked away together, as Camilla and her party quitted the Pantiles for Mount Pleasant.

CHAP. X.

Counsels for Conquest.

FORTUNATELY for Camilla, no eye was upon her at this period but that of Mrs. Arlbery; her changed countenance, else, must have betrayed still more widely her emotion. Mrs. Arlbery saw it with real concern, and saying she had something to consult her about, hurried on with her alone.

Camilla hardly knew what she did, or what she suffered: the suddenness of surprise which involved so severe a disappointment, almost stupified her faculties. Mrs. Arlbery uttered not a word by the way, and, when they arrived at home, saw her to her chamber, pressed her hand, and left her.

She now, from a sense of shame, came to her full recollection. She was convinced all her feelings were understood by Mrs. Arlbery; she thought over what her father had said upon such exposures, and, hopeless of any honourable end to her suspences, earnestly wished herself back at Etherington, to hide in his revered breast her confusion and her grief.

Even

Even Mrs. Arlbery she now believed had been mistaken; Edgar appeared never to have loved her; his attentions, his kindness, had all flowed from friendship; his solicitude, his counsel, had been the result of family regard.

When called to dinner, she descended with downcast eyes. She found no company invited; she felt thankful, yet abashed; and Mrs. Arlbery let her retire when the meal was over, but soon followed to beg she would prepare for the play.

She saw her hastily putting away her handkerchief, and dispersing her tears. "Ah! my dear," cried she, taking her hand, "I am afraid this old friend of yours does not much contribute to make Tunbridge Wells salubrious to you!"

Camilla affecting not to understand her, said she had never been in better health.

"Of mind, do you mean, or body?" cried Mrs. Arlbery, laughing; but seeing she only redoubled her distress, more seriously added, "Will you suffer me, my dear Miss Tyrold, to play the old friend, also, and speak to you with openness?"

Camilla durst not say no, though she feared to say yes.

"I must content myself with a tacit compliance, if I can obtain no other. I am really uneasy to talk with you; not, believe

me, from officiousness nor impertinence, but from a persuasion I may be able to promote your happiness. You won't speak, I see? And you judge perfectly right; for the less you disclaim, the less I shall torment you. Permit me, therefore, to take for granted that you are already aware I am acquainted with the state of your heart."

Camilla had now no wish but to fly; she fastened her eyes upon the door, and every thought was devoted to find the means of escape.

"Nay, nay, if you look frightened in sober sadness, I am gone. But shall I think less, or know less, for saying nothing? It is not speech, my dear Miss Tyrold, that makes detections; it only proclaims them."

A sigh was all the answer of Camilla: though, assured, thus, she had nothing to gain by flight, she forced herself to stay.

"We understand one another, I see, perfectly. Let me now, then, as unaffectedly go on, as if the grand avowal had been verbally made. That your fancy, my fair young friend, has hit upon a tormentor, I will not deny; yet not upon an ingrate; for this person, little as you seem conscious of your power, certainly loves you."

Surprised off all sort of guard, Camilla exclaimed, "O no!—O no!"

Mrs.

Mrs. Arlbery smiled, but went on: "Yes, my dear, he undoubtedly does you that little justice; yet, if you are not well advised, his passion will be unavailing; and your artlessness, your facility, and your innocence, with his knowledge, nay, his very admiration of them, will operate but to separate you."

Glowing with opposing yet strong emotions at these words, the countenance of Camilla asked an explanation, in defiance of her earnest desire to look indifferent or angry.

"You will wonder, and very naturally, how such attractions should work as impulses; but I will be plain and clear, and you must be candid, and rational, and forgive me. These attractions, my dear, will be the source of this mischief, because he sees, by their means; that you are undoubtedly at his command."

"No, madam! no, Mrs. Arlbery!" cried Camilla, in whose pride now every other feeling was concentrated, "he does not, cannot see it!—"

"I would not hurt you for the world, my very amiable young friend; but pardon me if I say, that not to see it—he must be blinder than I imagine him!—blinder than—to tell you the truth, I am much inclined to think any of his race."

Confounded, irritated, and wounded, Camilla remained a moment silent, and then, though almost inarticulately, answered: "If such is your opinion—at least he shall see it—fancy it, I mean—no more!"

"Keep to that resolution, and you will behold him—where he ought to be—at your feet."

Irresistibly, though most unwillingly, appeased by this unexpected conclusion, she turned away to hide a blush in which anger had not solely a place, and suffered Mrs. Arlbery to go on.

"There is but one single method to make a man of his ruminating class know his own mind: give him cause to fear he will lose you. Animate, inspirit, inspire him with doubt."

"But why, ma'am," cried Camilla, in a faltering voice; "why should you suppose I will take any method at all?"

"The apprehension you will take none is the very motive that urges me to speak to you. You are young enough in the world to think men come of themselves. But you are mistaken, my dear. That happens rarely; except with inflamed and hot-headed boys, whose passions are in their first innocence as well as violence. Mandelbert has already given the dominion of his

his to other rulers, who will take more care of his pride, though not of his happiness. Attend to one who has travelled further into life than yourself, and believe me when I assert, that his bane, and yours alike, is his security."

With a colour yet deeper than ever, Camilla resentfully repeated, "Security!"

"Nay, how can he doubt? with a situation in life such as his—"

"Situation in life! Do you think he can ever suppose that would have the least, the most minute weight with me?"

"Why, it would be a very shocking supposition, I allow! but yet, some how or other, that same fordid thing called money, does manage to produce such abundance of little comforts, and pretty amusements, that one is apt—to half suspect—it may really not much add to any matrimonial aversion."

The very idea of such a suspicion offended Camilla beyond all else that had passed; Mrs. Arlbery appeared to her indelicate, unkind, and ungenerous; and regretting she had ever seen, and repenting she had ever known her, she sunk upon a chair in a passionate burst of tears.

Mrs. Arlbery embraced her, begged her pardon a thousand times, and assured her all she had uttered was the effect of esteem as well as of affection, since she saw her too

delicate, and too inexperienced, to be aware either of the dangers or the advantages surrounding her; and that very far from meaning to hurt her, she had few things more at heart than the desire of proving the sincerity of her regard, and endeavouring to contribute to her happiness.

Camilla thanked her, dried her eyes, and strove to appear composed; but she was too deeply affected for internal consolation: she felt herself degraded in being openly addressed as a love-sick girl; and injured in being supposed, for a moment, capable of any mercenary view. She desired to be excused going out, and to have the evening to herself; not on account of the expence of the play; she had again wholly forgotten her poverty; but to breathe a little alone, and indulge the sadness of her mind.

Mrs. Arlbery, unfeignedly sorry to have caused her any pain, would not oppose her inclination; she repeated her apologies, dragged from her an assurance of forgiveness, and went down stairs alone to a summons from Sir Sedley Clarendel.

The first moments of her departure were spent by Camilla in the deepest dejection; from which, however, the recollection of her father, and her solemn engagement to him, soon awakened her. She read again
his

his injunctions, and resolving not to add to her unhappiness by any failure in her duty, determined to make her appearance with some spirit before Mrs. Arlbery set out for the play.

* * * *

"My dear Clarendel," cried that lady, as she entered the parlour, "this poor little girl is in a more serious plight than I had conjectured. I have been giving her a few hints, from the stores of my worldly knowledge, and they appear to her so detestably mean and vulgar, that they have almost broken her heart. The arrival of this odious Mandlebert has overthrown all our schemes. We are cut up, Sir Sedley! completely cut up!"

"O! indubitably to a degree!" cried the Baronet, with an air of mingled pique and conceit; "how could it be otherwise? Exists the wight who could dream of competition with Mandlebert?"

"Nay, now, my dear Clarendel, you enchant me. If you view his power with resentment, you are the man in the world to crumble it to the dust. To work, therefore, dear creature, without delay."

"But how must I go about it? A little instruction, for pity!"

"Charming innocent! So you don't know how to try to make yourself agreeable?"

"Not in the least! I am ignorant to a redundancy."

"And were you never more adroit?"

"Never. A Goth in grain! Witless from the first "*muling in my nurse's arms!*"

"Come, come, a truce for a moment with foppery, and answer me seriously: Were you ever in love, Clarendel? Speak the truth. I am just seized with a passionate desire to know."

"Why—yes—" answered he, pulling his lips with his fingers, "I think—I rather think—I was once."

"O tell! tell! tell!"

"Nay, I am not very positive. One hears it is to happen; and one is put upon thinking of it while so very young, that one soon takes it for granted. Define it a little, and I can answer you more accurately. Pray, is it any thing beyond being very fond, and very silly, with a little touch of melancholy?"

"Precise! precise! Tell me, therefore, what it was that caught you. Beauty? fortune? flattery? or wit? Speak! speak! I die to know!"

"O! I have forgotten all that these hundred years! I have not the smallest trace left!"

"You

"You are a terrible coxcomb, my dear Clarendel! and I am worse myself for giving you so much encouragement. But, however, we must absolutely do something for this fair and drooping violet. She won't go even to the play to-night."

"Lovely lily! how shall we rear it? Tell her I beg her to be of our party."

"You beg her? My dear Sir Sedley! what do you talk of?"

"Tell her 'tis my intreaty, my supplication!"

"And you think that will make her comply?"

"You will see."

"Bravo, my dear Clarendel! bravo! However, if you have the courage to send such a message, I have not to deliver it: but I will write it for you."

She then wrote:

"Sir Sedley Clarendel asserts, that if you are not as inexorable as you are fair, you will not refuse to join our little party to night at the theatre."

Camilla, after a severe conflict from this note, which she concluded to be the mere work of Mrs. Arlbery to draw her from retirement, sent word she would wait upon her.

Sir Sedley heard the answer with exultation, and Mrs. Arlbery with surprise. She declared, however, that since he pos-
fessed

essed this power, she should not suffer it to lie dormant, but make it work upon her fair friend, till it either excited jealousy in Mandsebert, or brought indifference to herself. "My resolution," cried she, "is fixt; either to see him at her feet, or drive him from her heart."

Camilla, presently descending, looked away from Mrs. Arlbery; but, unsuspecting as she was undesigning, thanked the Baronet for his message, and told him she had already repented her solitary plan. The Baronet felt but the more flattered, from supposing this was said from the fear of flattering him.

In the way to the theatre, however, Camilla, with much confusion, recollected her empty purse; but could not, before Mr. and Miss Dannel and Sir Sedley, prevail with herself to make it known; she could only determine to ask Mrs. Arlbery to pay for her, at present, and defer the explanation till night.

But, just as she alighted from the coach, Mrs. Arlbery, in her usual manner, said: "Do pay for me, good Dannel; you know how I hate money."

Camilla, hurrying after her, whispered, "May I beg you to lend me some silver?"

"Silver! I have not carried any about me since I lost my dear ponies and my pet phaeton. I am as poor as Job; and there-

fore bent upon avoiding all temptation. Somebody or other always trusts me. If they get paid, they bless their stars. If not, —do you hear me, Mr. Dannel?—'twill be all the same an hundred years hence; so what man of any spirit will think of it? hey, Mr. Dannel?"

"But—dear madam—pray—"

"O! they'll change for you, here, my dear, without difficulty."

"But—pray—stop!—I—I have no gold neither!"

"Have you done lik me, then, come out without your purse?"

"No!—"

This single negative, and the fluttered manner and low voice in which it was pronounced, gave Mrs. Arlbery the utmost astonishment. She said nothing, however, but called aloud to Mr. Dannel to settle for the whole party.

Mr. Dannel, during the dialogue, had paid for himself and his daughter, and walked on into the box.

"What a Hottentot!" exclaimed Mrs. Arlbery. "Come, then, Clarendel, take pity on two poor distressed objects, and let us pass."

Sir Sedley, little suspicious of the truth, yet flattered to be always called upon to be the banker of Camilla, obeyed with alacrity.

Mrs.

Mrs. Arlbery placed Camilla upon a seat before her, and motioned to the Baronet to remain in a row above; and then, in a low voice, said: "My dear Clarendel, do you know they have let that poor girl come to Tunbridge without a sixpence in her pocket!"

"Is it possible?"

"'Tis a fact. I never suspected it, till suspicion was followed by confirmation. She had a guinea or two, I fancy, at first, just to equip her with one set of things to appear in; which, probably, the good Parson imagined would last as clean and as long at a public place as at his parsonage-house, where my best suit is worn about twice in a summer. But how that rich old uncle of hers could suffer her to come without a penny, I can neither account for nor forgive. I have seen her shyness about money-matters for some days past; but I so little conjectured the possibility of her distress, that, unfortunately, I have always rather increased than spared it."

"Sweet little angel!" exclaimed the Baronet, in a tone of tenderness; "I had indeed no idea of her situation. Heavens! I could lay half my fortune at her feet to set her at ease!"

"Half, my dear Clarendel!" cried Mrs. Arlbery, laughing; "nay, why not the whole?"

whole? where will you find a more lovely companion?"

"Pho, pho!—but why should it be so vastly horrid an incongruity that a man who, by chance, is rich, should do something for a woman who, by chance, is poor? How immensely impertinent is the prejudice that forbids so natural a use of money! why should the better half of a man's actions be always under the dominion of some prescriptive slavery? 'Tis hideous to think of. And how could he more delectably spend, or more extatically enjoy, his fortune, than by so equitable a participation?"

"True, Sir Sedley. And you men are all so disinterested, so pure in your benevolence, so free from any spirit of encroachment, that no possible ill consequence could ensue from such an arrangement. When once a fair lady had made you a civil courtesy, you would wholly forget you had ever obliged her. And you would let her walk her ways, and forget it also: especially if, by chance, she happened to be young and pretty."

This raillery was interrupted by the appearance of Edgar in an opposite box. "Ah!" cried Mrs. Arlbery, "look but at that piece of congelation that nothing seems to thaw! Enter the lists against him, dear

dear Clarendel! He has stationed himself there merely to watch and discountenance her. I hate him heartily; yet he rolls in wealth, and she has nothing. I must bring them, therefore, together, positively: for though a husband—such a fastidious one especially—is not what I would recommend to her for happiness, 'tis better than poverty. And, after his cold and selfish manner, I am convinced he loves her. He is evidently in pursuit of her, though he wants generosity to act openly. Work him but with a little jealousy, and you will find me right."

"Me! my dear madam? me! my divine Mrs. Arlbery? Alas! with what chance? No! see where enters the gallant Major. Thence must issue those poignant darts that newly vivify the expiring embers of love."

"Now don't talk such nonsense when I am really serious. You are the very man for the purpose: because, though you have no feeling, Mandlebert does not know you are without it. But those officers are too notoriously unmeaning to excite a moment's real apprehension. They have a new dulcinea wherever they newly quarter, and carry about the few ideas they possess from damsel to damsel, as regularly as from town to town."

The

The Major now addressed them, and endeavoured, as usual, to monopolize Camilla; but her thoughts were all upon Edgar, and the whole ~~the~~ could command of her attention was bestowed upon Sir Sedley.

This was not unobserved by Edgar, who now again wavered in believing she loved the Major: but the doubt brought with it no pleasure; it led him only the more to condemn her. Does she turn, thought he, thus, from one to the other, with no preference but of accident or caprice? Is her favour thus light of circulation? Is it now the mawkish Major, and now the coxcomb Clarendel? Already is she thus versed in the common dissipation of coquetry?—O! if so, how blest has been my escape! A coquette wife!—

His heart swelled, and his eye no longer sought her.

* * * *

At night, as soon as she went to her own room, Mrs. Arlbery followed her, and said: “My dear Miss Tyrold, I know much better than you how many six-pences and three-pences are perpetually wanted at places such as these. Do suffer me to be your banker. What shall we begin our account with?”

Camilla

— Camilla felt really thankful for being spared an opening upon this subject. She consented to borrow two guineas; but Mrs. Arlbery would not leave her with less than five, adding, “ I insist upon doubling it in a day or two. Never mind what I say about my distress, and my phaeton, and my ponies; ’tis only to torment Denniel, who trembles at parting with half-a-crown for half an hour; or else, now and then, to set other people a staring; which is not unamusing, when nothing else is going forward. But believe me, my dear young friend, were I really in distress, or were I really not to discharge these petty debts I incur, you would soon discover it by the thinness of our parties! These men that now so flock around us, would find some other loadstone. I know them pretty well, dear creatures!—”

Though shocked to appear thus destitute, Camilla was somewhat relieved to have no debt but with Mrs. Arlbery; for she resolved to pay Sir Sedley and the milliner the next day, and to settle with Mrs. Arlbery upon her return to Etherington.

BOOK VI.

CHAP. I.

Strictures upon the Ton.

THE next day was appointed for the master of the ceremonies' ball; which proved a general rendezvous of all parties, and almost all classes of company.

* * * *

Far different were the sensations with which Edgar and Camilla saw each other this night, from those with which, so lately, they had met in the same apartment. Edgar thought her degenerating into the character of a coquette, and Camilla, in his intended tour, anticipated a period to all their intercourse.

She was received, meanwhile, in general, with peculiar and flattering attention. Sir Sedley Clarendel made up to her, with public smiles and courtesy; even Lord Newford and Sir Theophilus Jarard, though they
passed

passed by Mrs. Arlbery without speaking to her, singled out Camilla for their devoirs. The distinction paid her by the admired Mrs. Berlinton, had now not only marked her as an object whom it would not be derogatory to treat with civility, but as one who might, henceforward, be regarded herself as admitted into *certain circles*.

Mrs. Arlbery, though every way a woman of fashion, ~~they conceived to be~~ somewhat wanting in *ton*, since she presided in no party, ~~was unnoticed by Lady Alicia~~ Selmore, and unknown to Mrs. Berlinton.

Ton, in the scale of *edmoisseurs* in the *certain circles*, is as much above fashion, as fashion is above fortune: for though the latter is an ingredient that all alike cover to possess, it is courted without being respected, and desired without being honoured, except only by those who, from earliest life, have been taught to earn it as a business. *Ton*, meanwhile, is as attainable without birth as without understanding, though in all the *certain circles* it takes place of either. To define what it is, would be as difficult to the most renowned of its votaries, as to an utter stranger to its attributes. That those who call themselves of the *ton* either lead, or hold cheap all others, is obtrusively evident; but how and by what art they attain such pre-eminence, they would be perplexed

plexed to explain. That some whim has happily called forth imitators; that some strange phrase has been adopted; that something odd in dress has become popular; that some beauty, or some deformity, no matter which, has found annotators; may commonly be traced as the origin of their first public notice. But to whichever of these accidents their early fame may be attributed, its establishment and its glory is built upon vanity that knows no deficiency, or insolence that knows no blush.

Notwithstanding her high superiority both in capacity and knowledge, Mrs. Arlbery felt piqued by this neglect, though she laughed at herself for heeding it. "Nevertheless," cried she, "those who shew contempt, even though themselves are the most contemptible, always seem on the higher ground. Yet, with regard to these animals of the *ton*, 'tis only that nobody combats them. Their presumption is so notorious, that, either by disgust or alarm, it keeps off reprehension. Let any one boldly, and face to face, venture to be more uncivil than themselves, and they would be overpowered at once. Their valour is no better than that of a barking cur, who affrights all that go on without looking at him, but who, the moment he

is

is turned upon with a stamp and a fierce look, retreats himself, amazed, afraid, and ashamed."

"If you, Mrs. Arlbery," said the General, "would undertake to tutor them, what good you might do!"

"O Heavens! General, suspect me not of such reforming Quixotism! I have not the smallest desire to do them any good, believe me! If nature has given them no sense of propriety, why should I be more liberal? I only want to punish them; and that not, alas! from virtue, but spite!"

The conversation of the two men of the *ton* with Camilla was soon over. It was made up of a few disjointed sentences, abusing Tunbridge, and praising the German Spa, in cant words, emphatically and conceitedly pronounced, and brought round upon every occasion, and in every speech, with so precise an exclusion of all other terms, that their vocabulary hardly consisted of forty words in totality.

Edgar occupied the space they vacated the moment of their departure, and, when he could be heard, began speaking of Sir Sedley Clarendel; he felt miserable in what he thought her inconsiderate encouragement of such impertinence; and the delicacy which restrained him from expressing his opinion of the Major, had no weight
with

with him here, as jealousy had no share in his dislike to the acquaintance : he believed the young Baronet incapable of all love but for himself, and a decidedly destined bachelor : without, therefore, the smallest hesitation, he plainly avowed that he had never met with a more thoroughly conceited fop, a more elaborate and self-sufficient coxcomb.

“ You see him only,” said Camilla, “ with the impression made by his general appearance ; and that is all against him : I always look for his better qualities and rejoice in finding them. His very sight fills me with grateful pleasure, by reminding me of the deliverance I owe to him.”

Edgar, amazed, intreated an explanation ; and, when she had given it, struck and affected, clasped his hands, and exclaimed, “ How providential such a rescue ! and how differently shall I henceforth behold him !” And, almost involuntarily, turning to Mrs. Arlbery, he intreated to be presented to the young Baronet.

Sir Sedley received his overtures with some surprise, but great civility ; and then went on with a ludicrous account he was giving to Lord Newford and Sir Theophilus, of the quarrel of Macdersey with Mr. Dubster.

“How awake thou art grown, Clary!” cried Sir Theophilus; “A little while ago thou wast all hip and vapour; and now thou dost nothing but patronise fun.”

“Why, yes,” answered the Baronet, “I begin to tire of *ennui*. ’Tis grown so common. I saw my footman beginning it but last week.”

“O hang it! O curse it!” cried Lord Newford; “your footman!”

“Yes, the rogue is not without parts. I don’t know if I shan’t give him some lessons, upon leaving it off myself. The only difficulty is to find out what, in this nether world, to do without it. How can one fill up one’s time? Stretching, yawning, and all that, are such delicious ingredients for coaxing on the lazy hours!”

“O hang it! O curse it!” cried Lord Newford; “who can exist without them? I would not be bound to pass half an hour without yawning and stretching for the Mogul’s empire. I’d rather snap short at once.”

“No, no, don’t snap short yet, little Newy,” cried Sir Sedley. “As to me, I am never at a loss for an expedient. I am not without some thoughts of falling in love.”

He looked at Edgar; who, not aware this was designed to catch his attention, naturally

naturally exclaimed, "Thought! can you choose or avoid it at pleasure?"

"Most certainly. After four-and-twenty a man is seldom taken by surprise; at least, not till he is past forty: and then, the fear of being too late, sometimes renovates the eagerness of the first youth. But, in general, your willing slaves are boys."

Edgar, laughing, begged a little information how he meant to put his thoughts into execution.

Nothing so facile! 'Tis but to look at some fair object attentively, to follow her with your eyes when she quits the room; never to let them rest without watching for her return; filling up the interval with a few sighs; to which, in a short time, you grow so habituated, that they become natural; and then, before you are aware, a certain solicitude and restlessness arise, which the connoisseurs in natural history dub falling in love."

"These would be good hints," said Edgar, "to urge on waverers, who wish to persuade themselves to marry."

"O no, my dear sir! no! that's a mistake of the first magnitude; no man is in love when he marries. He may have loved before; I have even heard he has sometimes loved after: but at the time never. There is something in the formalities of the matri-

matrimonial preparations that drive away all the little cupidons. They rarely stand even a demand of consent—unless they doubt obtaining it; but a Settlement! Parchments! Lawyers!—No! there is not a little Love in the Island of Cyprus, that is not ready to lend a wing to set passion, inspiration, and tenderness to flight, from such excruciating legalities.”

“Don’t prose, Clary; don’t prose,” cried Sir Theophilus, gaping till his mouth was almost distorted.

“It seems, then,” said Edgar, “to be much the same thing what sort of a wife falls to a man’s lot; whether it be the woman of his choice, or a person he should blush to own?”

“Blush!” repeated Sir Sedley, smiling; “no! no! A man of any fashion never blushes for his wife, whatever she may be. For his mistress, indeed, he may blush: for if there are any small failings there, his taste may be called in question.”

“Blush about a wife!” exclaimed Lord Newford; “O hang it! O curse it! that’s too bad!”

“Too bad, indeed,” cried Sir Theophilus; “I can’t possibly patronise blushing.”

“’Tis the same thing then, also,” said Edgar, “how she turns out when the knot is tied, whether well or ill!”

“To

"To exactitude! If he marry her for beauty, let her prove what she may, her face offers his apology. If for money, he needs none. But if, indeed, by some queer chance, he marries with a view of living with her, then, indeed, if his particularity gets wind, he may grow a little anxious for the acquittal of his oddity, in seeing her approved."

"Approved! Ha! ha!" cried Lord Newford; "a wife approved! That's too bad, Clary; that's too bad!"

"Poor Clary, what art proving about?" cried Sir Theophilus. "I can't possibly patronise this proving."

The entrance of the beautiful Mrs. Berlington and her train now interrupted this conversation: the young Baronet immediately joined her; though not till he had given his hand to Edgar, in token of his willingness to cultivate his acquaintance.

Edgar, returning to Camilla, confessed he had too hastily judged Sir Sedley, when he concluded him a fool, as well as a fop; "For," added he, with a smile, "I see, now, one of those epithets is all he merits. He is certainly far from deficient in parts, though he abuses the good gifts of nature with such pedantry of affectation and conceit."

Camilla was now intent to clear the history of the cotillon; when Mrs. Berlington approaching,

proaching, and, with graceful fondness, taking her hand, entreated to be indulged with her society : and, since she meant not to dance, for Edgar had not asked her, and the Major she had refused, she could not resist the invitation. She had lost her fear of displeasing Mrs. Arlbery by quitting her, from conceiving a still greater, of wearying by remaining with her.

Edgar, anxious both to understand and to discuss this new connexion, hovered about the party with unremitting vigilance. But, though he could not either look at or listen to Mrs. Berlington without admiring her, his admiration was neither free from censure of herself, nor terror for her companion : he saw her far more beautiful than prudent, more amiable than dignified. The females in her group were few, and little worthy notice ; the males appeared, to a man, without disguise, though not without restraint, her lovers. And though no one seemed selected, no one seemed despised ; she appeared to admit their devoirs with little consideration ; neither modestly retiring from power, nor vainly displaying it.

Camilla quitted not this enchantress till summoned by Mrs. Arlbery ; who, seeing herself again, from the arrival of Lady Althea Selmore, without any distinguished party, as that lady drew into her circle all
people

people of any consequence not already attracted by Mrs. Berlinton, grew sick of the ball and the rooms, and impatient to return home. Camilla, in retiring, presented; folded in a paper, the guinea, half-guinea, and silver, she had borrowed of Sir Sedley; who received it without presuming at any contest; though not, after what he had heard from Mrs. Arlbery, without reluctance.

Edgar watched the instant when Camilla moved from the gay group; but Mrs. Mittin who had contrived to get a ticket for the Ball, and persuaded Miss Dannel to carry her home, watched it also; and, approaching her more speedily, because with less embarrassment, fastened upon her as she left the room.

"Well now, young ladies," said she, "I'm going to tell you a secret. Do you know, for all I call myself Mrs. I'm single?"

"Dear, la!" exclaimed Miss Dannel; "and for all you're so old!"

"So old, Miss! Who told you I was so old? I'm not so very old as you may think me. I'm no particular age, I assure you. Why, what made you think of that?"

"La! I don't know; only you don't look very young."

"I can't help that, Miss Dannel. Perhaps you mayn't look young yourself one of these days. People can't always stand still just at a particular minute. Why, how old, now, do you take me to be? Come, be sincere."

"La! I'm sure I can't tell; only I thought you was an old woman."

"An old woman! Lord, my dear, people would laugh to hear you. You don't know what an old woman is. Why it's being a cripple, and blind, and deaf, and dumb, and flavering, and without a tooth. Pray, how am I like all that?"

"Nay, I'm sure I don't know; only I thought, by the look of your face, you must be monstrous old."

"Lord! I can't think what you've got in your head, Miss Dannel! I never heard as much before, since I was born. Why the reason I'm called Mrs. is not because of that, I assure you; but because I'd a mind to be taken for a young widow, on account that every body likes a young widow; and if one is called Miss, people begin so soon to think one an old maid; that it's quite disagreeable."

This discourse brought them to the carriage.

CHAP. II.

Traits of Character.

THE following morning, Mrs. Mittin came with eager intelligence that the raffle was fixed for one o'clock; and, without any scruple, accompanied the party to the shop, addressing herself to every one of the set as to a confirmed and intimate friend. But her chief supporter was Mr. Denzel, whose praise of her was the vehicle to his censure of his sister-in-law. That lady was the person in the world whom he most feared and disliked. He had neither spirit for the splendid manner in which she lived, nor parts for the vivacity of her conversation. The first, his love of money made him condemn as extravagant; and the latter his self-love made him hate, because he could not understand. He persuaded himself, therefore, that she had more words than meaning; and extolled all the obvious truths uttered by Mrs. Mittin, to shew his superior admiration of what, being plain and incontrovertible, he dignified with the panegyric of being sensible.

When they came upon the Pantiles, they were accosted by Mr. Dubster; who having solemnly asked them, one by one, how they all did, joined Mrs. Mitten, saying, "Well, I can't pretend as I'm over sorry you've got neither of those two comical gentlemen with you, that behaved so free to me for nothing. I don't think it's particular agreeable being treated so; though it's a thing, I don't much mind. It's not worth fretting about."

"Well, don't say any more about it," cried Mrs. Mitten, endeavouring to shake him off; "I dare say you did something to provoke 'em, or they're too genteel to have taken any notice of you."

"Me provoke them! why what did I do? I was just like a mere lamb, as one may say, at the very time that young Captain fell abusing me so, calling of me a little dirty fellow, without no provocation. If I'm little, or big, I don't see that it's any business of his. And as to dirty, I'd put on all clean linen but the very day before, as the people can tell you at the inn; so the whole was a mere piece of falsehood from one end to t'other."

"Well, well, what do you talk about it for? You should never take any thing ill of a young gentleman. It's only aggravating him so much the worse."

"Aggra-

“Aggravating him, Mrs. Mittin! why what need I mind that? Do you think I’m to put up with his talking of caning me, and such like, because of his being a young gentleman? Not I, I assure you! I’m no such person. And if once I feel his switch across these here shoulders, it won’t be so well for him.”

The party now entered the shop where the raffle was to be held.

Edgar was already there; he had no power to keep away from any place where he was sure to behold Camilla; and a raffle brought to his mind the most tender recollections. He was now with Lord O’Lerney, in whose candour and benevolence of character he took great delight, and with whom he had joined Lady Isabella Irby, who had been drawn as a quiet spectatress to the fight, by a friend who, having never seen the humours of a raffle, had desired to look on. He languished to have Camilla presented to this lady, in whose manners and conversation, dignity and simplicity were equally blended.

While he was yet, though absently, conversing with them, Lord O’Lerney pointed out Camilla to Lady Isabella.

“I have taken notice of her already at her rooms, answered her Ladyship; and I

have seldom, I think, seen a more interesting young creature."

"The character of her countenance," said Lord O'Lerney, "strikes me very peculiarly. 'Tis so intelligent, yet so unhackneyed, so full of meaning, yet so artless, that, while I look at her, I feel myself involuntarily anxious for her welfare."

"I don't think she seems happy," said Lady Isabella; "Do you know who she is, my Lord?"

Edgar, here, with difficulty suppressed a sigh. Not happy! thought he; ah! wherefore? what can make Camilla unhappy?

"I understand she is a niece of Sir Hugh Tyrold," answered his Lordship; "a Yorkshire Baronet. She is here with an acquaintance of mine, Mrs. Arlbery, who is one of the first women I have ever known, for wit and capacity. She has an excellent heart, too; though her extraordinary talents, and her carelessness of opinion, make it sometimes, but very unjustly, doubted."

Edgar heard this with much pleasure. A good word from Lord O'Lerney quieted many fears; he hoped he had been unnecessarily alarmed; he determined, in future, to judge her more favourably.

"I should be glad," continued his Lordship, "to hear this young lady were either
well

well established, or returned to her friends without becoming an object of public notice. A young woman is no where so rarely respectable, or respected, as at these water-drinking places, if seen at them either long or often. The search of pleasure, at a spot consecrated for restoring health to the sick, the infirm, and the suffering, seems to imply a rage for dissipation that does not give the most pleasant idea of the feeling and disposition."

"Yet, may not the sick, my Lord, be rather amended than hurt by the sight of gaiety around them?"

"Yes, my dear Lady Isabella; and the effect, therefore, I believe to be beneficial. But as this is not the motive why the young and the gay seek these spots, it is not here they will find themselves most honoured. And the mixture of pain and illness with splendor and festivity, is so unnatural, that probably it is to that we must attribute that a young woman is no where so hardly judged. If she is without fortune, she is thought a female adventurer, seeking to sell herself for its attainment; if she is rich, she is supposed a willing dupe, ready for a snare, and only looking about for an ensnarer."

"And yet, young women seldom, I believe, my Lord, merit this severity of judgment. They come but hither in the summer,

mers, as they go to London in the winter, simply in search of amusement, without any particular purpose."

"True; but they do not weigh what their observers weigh for them, that the search of public recreation in the winter is, from long habit, permitted without censure; but that the summer has not, as yet, prescription so positively in its favour; and those who, after meeting them all the winter at the opera, and all the spring at Ranelagh, hear of them all the summer at Cheltenham, Tunbridge, &c. and all the autumn at Bath, are apt to inquire when is the season for home."

"Ah, my Lord! how wide are the poor inconsiderate little flutterers from being aware of such a question! How necessary to youth and thoughtlessness is the wisdom of experience!"

"Why does she not come this way, if thought Edgar; why does she not gather from these understanding, yet gentle moralists, instruction that might benefit all her future life?"

"There is nothing," said Lord O'Lenney, "I more sincerely pity than the delusions surrounding young females. The strongest admirers of their eyes are frequently the most austere satirists of their conduct."

The

The entrance of Lord Newford, Sir Theophilus Jarard, and Sir Sedley Clarendel, all noisily talking and laughing together, interrupted any further conversation. The two former no sooner saw Camilla, and perceived neither Lady Alitha Selmore, nor Mrs. Berlington, than they made up to her; and Sir Sedley, who now found she was completely established in the *bon ton*, felt something of pride mix with pleasure in publicly availing himself of his intimacy with her; and something like interest mix with curiosity, in examining if Edgar were struck with her ready attention to him.

Upon Edgar, however, it made not the slightest impression. While Sir Sedley had appeared to him a mere fop, he had thought it degraded her; but now he regarded him as her preserver, it seemed both natural and merited.

Sir Sedley, not aware of this reasoning, was somewhat piqued; and taking him to another part of the shop, whispered, "I am horribly vapoured! Do you know? I have some thoughts of trying that little girl! Do you think one could make any thing of her?"

"How? what do you mean?" cried Edgar, with sudden alarm.

Sir Sedley, a little flattered, affectedly answered, "O! if you have any serious designs

designs that way, incontestably I won't interfere."

"Me!" cried Edgar, surprised and offended; "believe me, no! I have all my life considered her—as my sister."

Sir Sedley saw this was spoken with effort; and negligently replied, "Nay, you are just at the first epocha for marrying from inclination; but you are in the right not to perform so soon the funeral honours of liberty. 'Tis what you may do at any time. So many girls want establishments, that a man of sixty can just as easily get a wife of eighteen, as a man of one-and-twenty. The only inconvenience in that sort of alliance is, that though she begins with submitting to her venerated husband as prettily as to her papa; she is terribly apt to have a knack of running away from him, afterwards, with equal facility."

"That is rather a discouraging article, I confess," cried Edgar, "for the tardy votaries of Hymen!"

"O no! 'tis no great matter!" answered he, patting his snuff-box; "we are impetrable in the extreme to those sort of grievances now-a-days. We are at such prodigious expence of sensibility in public, for tales of sorrow told pathetically at a full board, that if we suffered much for our private concerns to boot, we must always meet one another with tears in our eyes."

We

We never weep now, but at dinner, or at some diversion."

Lord Newford, pulling him by the arm, called out, "Come, Clary, what art about man? we want thee."

"Come, Clary! don't shirk, Clary!" cried Sir Theophilus; "I can't possibly patronise this shirking." And they hauled him to a corner of the shop, where all three resumed their customary laughing whispers.

"You will not perhaps suspect, Lady Isabella," said Lord O'Lerney, smiling, "that one of that triumvirate is by no means deficient in parts, and can even, when he desires it, be extremely pleasing?"

"Your Lordship judges rightly; I confess I had not, indeed, formed such an idea of him."

"See then," said his Lordship, "how futile an animal is man without some decided character and principle!

"He's every thing by turns, and nothing long!"

Wise, foolish; virtuous, vicious; active, indolent; prodigal and avaricious! No contrast is too strong for him while guided but by accident or impulse. This gentle-

*Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel.

man

man also, in common with the rest of his *tonnish* brethren, is now daily, though unconsciously, hoarding up a world of unprepared-for mortification, by not foreseeing that the more he is celebrated in his youth for being the leader of the *ton*, and the man of the day, the earlier he will be regarded as a creature out of date, an old beau, and a fine gentleman of former times. But 'tis by reverses such as these, that folly and impropriety pay their penalties. We might spare all our anger against the vanity of the beauty, or the conceit of the coxcomb. Are not wrinkles, always in waiting to punish the one, and age, without honour, to chastise and degrade the other?"

All the rafflers were now arrived, except Mrs. Berlington, who was impatiently expected. Lady Alishea Selmore had already sent a proxy to throw for her in her own woman; much to the dissatisfaction of most part of the company. A general rising and inquietude to look out for Mrs. Berlington, gave Edgar, at length, an opportunity to stand next to Camilla. "How I grieve," he cried, "you should not know Lady Isabella Irby! she seems to me a model for a woman of rank in her manners, and a model for a woman of every station in her mind. The world, I believe, could scarcely have tempted her to so offensive a mark of superiority as has just been exhibited by
Lady

Lady Alithea Selmore, who has ingeniously discovered a method of being signalised as the most important person out of twenty, by making herself nineteen enemies."

"I wonder," said Camilla, "she can think the chance of the ear-rings worth so high a price!"

A footman, in a splendid livery, now entering, inquired for Miss Tyrold. She was pointed out to him by Major Cerwood, and he delivered her a letter from Mrs. Berlington.

The contents were to entreat she would throw for that lady, who was in the midst of Aken-side's Pleasures of the Imagination, and could not tear herself away from them.

Camilla blushed excessively in proclaiming she was chosen Mrs. Berlington's proxy. Edgar saw with tenderness her modest confusion, and, with a pleasure the most touching, read the favourable impression it made upon Lord O'Lerney and Lady Isabella.

This seemed an opportunity irresistible for venting his fears and cautions about Mrs. Berlington; and, taking the bustling period in which the raffles were arranging the order and manner of throwing, he said, in a low and diffident tone of voice, "You have committed to me an important and, I fear, an importunate office; yet, while I hold, I cannot persuade myself not to fulfil it;

it; though I know that to give advice which opposes sentiment and feeling, is repugnant to independence and to delicacy: such, therefore, I do not mean to enforce; but merely to offer hints—intimations—and observations—that without controlling, may put you upon your guard.”

Camilla, affected by this unexpected address, could only look her desire for an explanation.

“The lady,” he continued, “whom you are presently to represent, appears to be uncommonly engaging:—”

“Indeed she is! She is attractive, gentle, amiable.”

“She seems also already to have caught your affection?”

“Who could have withheld it, that had seen her as I have seen her? She is as unhappy as she is lovely.—”

“I have heard of your first meeting, with as much pleasure in the presence of mind it called forth on one side, as with doubt and perplexity upon every circumstance I can gather of the other.—”

“If you knew her, you would find it impossible to hold any doubts; impossible to resist admiring, compassionating, and loving her!”

“If my knowledge of her bribed an interest in her favour, without convincing me
she

she deserved it, I ought rather to regret that you have not missed falling into such a snare, than that I have escaped it myself."

"I believe her free, nay incapable of all ill!" cried Camilla warmly; "though I dare not assert she is always coolly upon her guard."

"Do not let me hurt you," said Edgar, gently; "I see how lovely she is in person, and how pleasing in manners. And she is so young that, were she in a situation less exposed, want of steadiness or judgment might, by a little time, be set right. But here, there is surely much to fear from such early possession of power.—O that some happier chance had brought about such a peculiar intercourse for you with Lady Isabella Irby! There, to the pleasure of friendship, might be added the modesty of retired elegance; and the security of established respectability."

"And may not this yet happen with my new friend? Lady Isabella, though still young, is not in the extreme youth of Mrs. Berlington: a few more years, therefore, may bring equal discretion; and as she has already every other good quality, you may hereafter equally approve her."

"Do you think, then," said Edgar, half smiling, "that the few years of difference in their age were spent by Lady Isabella in
the

the manner they are now spent by Mrs. Berlinton? do you think she paved the way for her present dignified, though unassuming character, by permitting herself to be surrounded with professed admirers? by letting their sighs reach her ears? by suffering their eyes to fasten with open rapture upon her face? and by holding it sufficient not to suppress such liberties, so long as she does not avowedly encourage them?"

Camilla was startled. She had not seen her conduct in this light: yet her understanding refused to disown it might bear this interpretation.

Charmed with the candour of her silence, Edgar continued, "How wide from all that is open to similar comment, is the carriage and behaviour of Lady Isabella! how clear! how transparent! how free from all conjecture or blemish! They may each, indeed, essentially be equally innocent; and your opinion of Mrs. Berlinton corroborates the impression made by her beautiful countenance: yet how far more highly is the true feminine character preserved, where surmise is not raised, than where it can be parried! Think but of these two ladies, and mark the difference. Lady Isabella, addressed only where known, followed only because loved, sees no adulators encircling her, for adulation would alarm her; no admirers

mirers paying her homage, for such homage would offend her. She knows she has not only her own innocence to guard, but the honour of her husband. Whether she is happy with him or not, this deposit is equally sacred.—”

He stopt; for Camilla again started: The irrepressible frankness of her nature revolted against denying how much this last sentence struck her, and she ingenuously exclaimed, “O that this most amiable young creature were but more aware of this duty!”

“Ah! my dear Miss Camilla!” cried Edgar, with energy, “since you feel and own—and with you, that is always one—this baneful deficiency, drop, or at least suspend an intercourse too hazardous to be indulged with propriety! See what she may be sometime hence, ere you contract further intimacy. At present, unexperienced and unsuspicious, her dangers may be yours. You are too young for such a risk. Fly, fly from it, my dear Miss Camilla!—as if the voice of your mother were calling out to caution you!”

Camilla was deeply touched. An interest so warm in her welfare was soothing, and the name of her mother rendered it awful; yet, thus united, it appeared to her more strongly than ever to announce itself

as

as merely fraternal. She could not suppress a sigh; but he attributed it to the request he had urged, and, with much concern, added: "What I have asked of you, then, is too severe?"

Again irresistibly fighting, yet collecting all her force to conceal the secret cause, she answered, "If she is thus exposed to danger—if her situation is so perilous, ought I not rather to stay by, and help to support her, than by abandoning, perhaps contribute to the evil you think awaiting her?"

"Generous Camilla!" cried he, melted into tender admiration, "who can oppose so kind a design? So noble a nature!"

No more could be said, for all preliminaries were now settled, and the throwing being arranged to take place alphabetically, she was soon summoned to represent Mrs. Berlington.

From this time Edgar strove in vain to address her: even the Major could scarcely make way to her; for the two men of the *ton* would not quit her, and Sir Sedley Clarendel appeared openly devoted to her.

Edgar looked at her with the keenest emotion. The proof he had just received that her intrinsic worth was in its first state of excellence, had come home to his heart, and the fear of seeing her altered and spoilt

by the flatteries and dangers which environed her, with his wavering belief in her engagement with Major Cerwood, made him more wretched than ever. But when, some time after, she was called upon to throw for herself, the recollection that, from the former raffle, her half-guinea, even when the prize was in her hand, had been voluntarily withdrawn to be bestowed upon a distressed family, so powerfully affected him, that he could not rest in the shop; he was obliged to breathe a freer air, and to hide his disturbance by a retreat.

Her throw was the highest the dice had yet afforded. A Miss Williams alone came after her, whose throw was the lowest; Miss Camilla Tyrold, therefore, was proclaimed to be the winner.

This second testimony of the favour of fortune was a most pleasant surprise to Camilla, and made the room resound with felicitations; but they were soon interrupted by a violent quarrel upon the Pantiles, whence the voice of Macdersey was heard, hollooming out: "Don't talk, I say, Sir! don't presume to say a word!" and that of Mr. Dubster angrily answering, he would talk as long as he thought proper, whether it was agreeable or not.

Sir Sedley advanced to the combatants, in the hope to help on the dispute; but

Edgar returning at the sound of high words, took the Ensign by the arm, whom he prevailed with to accompany him up and down the Pantiles; while Mrs. Mittin ran to Mr. Dubster, and pulling him into the shop, said, "Mr. Dubster, if I'm not ashamed of you! how can you forget yourself so? talking to gentlemen at such a rate!"

"Why what should hinder me?" cried he; "do you think I shall put up with every thing as I used to do when you first knew me, and we used to meet at Mr. Typton's, the tallow chandler's, in Shug-lane? no, Mrs. Mittin, nor no such a thing; I'm turned gentleman myself, now, as much as the best of 'em; for I've nothing to do, but just what I choose."

"I protest Mr. Dubster," cried Mrs. Mittin, taking him into a corner, "you're enough to put a saint into a pet! how come you to think of talking of Mr. Typton here, before such gentlefolks? and where's the use of telling every body he's a tallow chandler? and as to my meeting with you there once or so, in a way, I desire you'll mention it no more; for it's so long ago, I have no recollection of it."

"No! why don't you remember—"

"Fiddle, faddle, what's the good of ripping up old stories about nothing? when you're with genteel people, you

must do as I do; never talk about business at all."

Macdersey now entered the shop, appeased by Edgar from shewing any further wrath, but wantonly inflamed by Sir Sedley, in a dispute upon the passion of love.

"Do you always, my dear friend," said the Baronet, "fall in love at first sight?"

"To be sure I do! If a man makes a scruple of that, it's ten to one but he's disappointed of doing it at all; because, after two or three second fights, the danger is, you may spy out some little flaw in the dear angel, that takes off the zest, and hinders you to the longest day you have to live."

"Profoundly cogitated that! you think then, my vast dear sir, the passion had more conveniently be kindled first, that the flaws may appear after, to cure it?"

"No, sir! no! when a man's once in love, those flaws don't signify, because he can't see them; or, if he could, at least he'd scorn to own them."

"Live for ever brave Ireland!" exclaimed Mrs. Arlbery; "what cold phlegmatic Englishman would have made a speech of so much gallantry?"

"As to an Englishman," said Macdersey, "you must never mind what he says

about the ladies, because he's too sheepish to speak out. He's just as often in love as his neighbours, only he's so shy he won't own it, till he sees if the young fair one is as much in love as himself; but a generous Irishman never scruples to proclaim the girl of his heart, though he should have twenty in a year."

"But is that perfectly delicate, my dearest sir, to the several Dulcineas?"

"Perfectly! your Irishman is the delicatest man upon earth to the fair sex; for he always talks of their cruelty, if they are never so kind. He knows every honest heart will pity him, if it's true; and if it i'n't, he is too much a man of honour not to complain all one; he knows how agreeable it is to the dear creatures; they always take it for a compliment."

"Whether avowedly or clandestinely," said Mrs. Arlbery, "still you are all in our chains. Even where you play the tyrant with us, we occupy all your thoughts; and if you have not the skill to make us happy, your next delight is to make us miserable; for though, now and then, you can contrive to hate, you can never arrive at forgetting us."

"Contrive to hate you!" repeated Macdersey; "I could as soon contrive to
turn

turn the world into a potatoe ; there is nothing upon earth, nothing under the whole firmament I value but beauty !”

“ A chearful glass, then,” said Sir Sedley, “ you think horridly intolerable ?”

“ A chearful glass, sir ! do you take me for a milk-sop ? do you think I don’t know what it is to be a man ? a chearful glass, sir, is the first pleasure in life ; the most convivial, the most exhilarating, the most friendly joy of a true honest soul ! what were existence without it ? I should choose to be off in half an hour ; which I should only make so long, not to shock my friends.”

“ Well, the glass is not what I patronise,” said Sir Theophilus ; “ it hips me so consumedly the next day ; no, I can’t patronise the glass.”

“ Not patronise wine ?” cried Lord Newford ; “ O hang it ! O curse it ! that’s too bad, Offy ! but hunting ! what dost think of that, little Offy ?”

“ Too obstreperous ! It rouses one at such awkward hours ; no, I can’t patronise hunting.”

“ Hunting !” cried Mactlesey ; “ O ! it leaves every thing behind it ; ’tis the thing upon the earth for which I have the truest taste. I know nothing else that is

not a bauble to it. A man is no more, in my estimation, than a child, or a woman, that don't enjoy it."

"Cards, then," said Sir Sedley, "you reprobate?"

"And dice?"—cried Lord Newford—

"And betting?"—cried Sir Theophilus.

"Why what do you take me for, gentlemen?" replied Macdersey, hotly; "Do you think I have no soul? no fire? no feeling? Do you suppose me a stone? a block? a lump of lead? I scorn such suspicions; I don't hold them worth answering. I am none of that torpid, morbid, drowsy tribe. I hold nobody to have an idea of life that has not rattled in his own hand the dear little box of promise. What ecstasy not to know if, in two seconds, one mayn't be worth ten thousand pounds! or else without a farthing! how it puts one on the rack! There's nothing to compare with it. I would not give up that moment to be sovereign of the East Indies! no, not if the West were to be put into the bargain."

"All these things," said Mr. Dannel, "are fit for nothing but to bring a man to ruin. The main chance is all that is worth thinking of. 'Tis money makes the mare

to

to go; and I don't know any thing that's to be done without it."

"Money!" exclaimed Macdersey, "'tis the thing under heaven I hold in the most disdain. It won't give me a moment's concern never to see its colour again. I vow solemnly, if it were not just for the pleasures of the table, and a jolly glass with a friend, and a few horses in one's stable, and a little ready cash in one's purse, for odd uses, I should not care if the mint were sunk under ground to-morrow. Money is what I most despise of all."

"That's talking out of reason," said Mr. Dannel, walking out of the shop with great disgust.

"Why, if I was to speak," said Mr. Dubster, encouraged to come forward by an observation so much to his own comprehension and taste as the last; "I can't but say I think the same; for money—"

"Keep your distance, sir!" cried the fiery Ensign; "keep your distance, I tell you! if you don't wish I should say something to you pretty cutting."

This broke up the party, which else the lounging spirit of the place, and the general consent by which all descriptions of characters seem determined to occupy any spot whatever, to avoid a moment's abode in their lodgings, would still have detained

till the dinner hour had forced to their respective homes. "To suppress all possibility of further dissention, Mrs. Arlbery put Miss Dannel under the care of Macdersey, and bid him attend her towards Mount Pleasant.

Mr. Dubster, having stared after them some time in silence, called out, "Keep my distance! I can't but say but what I think that young Captain the rudest young gentleman I ever happened to light upon! however, if he don't like me, I shan't take it much to heart: I can't pretend to say I like him any better; so he may choose; it's much the same to me; it breaks no squares."

Edgar, almost without knowing it, followed Camilla; but he could displace neither the Baronet nor the Major, who, one with a look of open exultation, and the other with an air of determined perseverance, retained each his post at her side.

He saw that all her voluntary attention was to Sir Sedley, and that the Major had none but what was called for and inevitable. Was this indifference, or security? was she seeking to obtain in the Baronet a new adorer, or to excite jealousy, through his means, in an old one? Silent he walked on, perpetually exclaiming to himself, "Can it
it

it be Camilla, the ingenuous, the artless Camilla, I find it so difficult to fathom, to comprehend, to trust?"

He had not spirits to join Mrs. Arlbery, though he lamented he had not, at once, visited her; since it was now awkward to take such a step without an invitation, which she seemed, by no means disposed to offer him. She internally resented the little desire he had ever manifested for her acquaintance; and they had both too much penetration not to perceive how wide either was from being the favourite of the other.



CHAP. III.

Traits of Eccentricity.

THUS passed the first eight days of the Tunbridge excursion, and another week succeeded without any varying event.

Mrs. Arlbery now, impelled with concern for Camilla, and resentment against Edgar, renewed the subject of her opinion and advice upon his character and conduct. "My dear young friend," cried she, "I cannot bear to see your days, your views, your feelings, thus fruitlessly consumed: I have observed this young man narrowly, and I am convinced he is not worth your consideration."

Camilla, deeply colouring, was beginning to assure her she had no need of this counsel; but Mrs. Arlbery, not listening, continued:

"I know what you must say; yet once more, I cannot refrain venturing at the liberty of lending you my experience. Turn your mind from him with all the expedition in your power, or its peace may

be

be touched for the better half of your life. You do not see, he does not, perhaps, himself know, how exactly he is calculated to make you wretched. He is a watcher; and a watcher, restless and perturbed himself, infects all he pursues with uneasiness. He is without trust, and therefore without either courage or consistency. To-day he may be persuaded you will make all his happiness; to-morrow, he may fear you will give him nothing but misery. Yet it is not that he is jealous of any other; 'tis of the object of his choice he is jealous, lest she should not prove good enough to merit it. Such a man after long wavering, and losing probable happiness in the terror of possible disappointment, will either die an old bachelor, with endless repinings at his own lingering fastidiousness, or else marry just at the eve of confinement for life from a fit of the gout. He then makes, on a sudden, the first prudent choice in his way; a choice no longer difficult, but from the embarrassment of its ease; for she must have no beauty, lest she should be sought by others; no wit, lest others should be sought by herself; and no fortune, lest she should bring with it a taste of independence, that might curb his own will, when the strength and spirit

are gone with which he might have curbed hers."

Camilla attempted to laugh at this portrait; but Mrs. Arlbery intreated her to consider it as faithful and exact. "You have thought of him too much," cried she, "to do justice to any other, or you would not, with such perfect unconcern, pass by your daily increasing influence with Sir Sedley Clarendel."

Excessively, and very seriously offended, Camilla earnestly besought to be spared any hints of such a nature.

"I know well," cried she, "how repugnant to seventeen is every idea of life that is rational. Let us, therefore, set aside, in our discussions, any thing so really beneficial as a solid connection, formed with a view to the worldly comforts of existence, and speak of Sir Sedley's devoirs merely as the instrument of teaching Mandlebert that he is not the only rich, young, and handsome man in this lower sphere, who has viewed Miss Camilla Tyrold with complacency. Clarendel, it is true, would lose every charm in my estimation by losing his heart; for the earth holds nothing comparable for deadness of weight, with a poor soul really in love—except when it happens to be with one's self!—yet, to alarm the
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the selfish irresolution of that impene-
trable Mandlebert, I should really delight to be-
hold him completely caught."

Camilla, distressed and confused, sought
to parry the whole as saillie; but Mrs.
Arlbery would not be turned aside from
her subject and purpose. "I languish, I
own," cried she, "to see that frozen youth
worked up into a little sensibility. I have
an instinctive aversion to those cold, haughty,
drawing-back characters, who are made up
of the selfishness of looking out for some-
thing that is wholly devoted to them, and
that has not a breath to breathe that is not
a sigh for their perfections."

"O! this is far—" Camilla began
meaning to say, far from the character of
Mandlebert; but ashamed of undertaking
his defence, she stopt short, and only men-
tally added, Even excellence such as his
cannot, then, withstand prejudice. "If
there is any way," continued Mrs.
Arlbery, "of animating him for a moment
out of himself, it can only be by giving
him a dread of some other. The poor
Major does his best; but he is neither rich
nor agreeable; who can fear him? Sir
Sedley will seem more formidable. Coun-
tenance, therefore, his present propensity
to wear your chains, till Mandlebert per-
ceives

ceives that he is putting them on; and then—mount to the rising ground you ought to tread, and shew, at once, your power and your disinterestedness, by turning from the handsome Baronet and all his immense wealth, to mark—since you are determined to indulge it—your unbiassed preference for Mandlebert.”

Camilla, irresistibly appeased by a picture so flattering to all her best feelings and dearest wishes, looked down; angry with herself to find she felt no longer angry with Mrs. Arlbery.

Mrs. Arlbery, perceiving a point gained, determined to enforce the blow, and then leave her to her reflections.

“Mandlebert is a creature whose whole composition is a pile of accumulated punctilios. He will spend his life in refining away his own happiness: but do not let him refine away yours. He is just a man to bewitch an innocent and unguarded young woman from forming any other connexion, and yet, when her youth and expectations have been sacrificed to his hesitation,—to conceive he does not use her ill in thinking of her no more, because he has entered into no verbal engagement. If his honour cannot be arraigned of break-
ing

ing any bond.—What matters merely breaking her heart?"

She then left the room; but Camilla dwelt upon nothing she had uttered except the one dear and inviting project of proving her disinterestedness to Edgar. "Oh if once," she cried, "I could annihilate every mercenary suspicion! If once I could shew Edgar that his situation has no charms for me—and it has none! none! then, indeed, I am his equal, though I am nothing,—equal in what is highest, in mind, in spirit, in sentiment."

From this time the whole of her behaviour became coloured by this fascinating idea; and a scheme which, if proposed to her under its real name of coquetry, she would have fled and condemned with antipathy, when presented to her as a means to mark her freedom from fardid motives, she adopted with inconsiderate fondness. The sight, therefore, of Edgar, wherever she met him, became now the signal for adding spirit to the pleasure with which, already, and without any design, she had attended to the young Baronet. Exertion gave to her the gaiety of which solicitude had deprived her; and she appeared, in the
 eyes

eyes of Sir Sedley, every day more charming. He cast off, in return, all airs of affectation, when he conversed with her separately; and, though still, in all mixed companies, they were resumed, the real integrity, as well as indifference of her heart, made that a circumstance but to stimulate this new species of intercourse, by representing it to be equally void of future danger to them both.

All this, however, failed of its desired end. Edgar never saw her engaged by Sir Sedley, but he thought her youthfully grateful, and esteemed her the more, or beheld her as a mere coquette, and ceased to esteem her at all. But never for a moment was any personal uneasiness excited by their mutual increasing intimacy. The conversations he had held, both with the Baronet and herself, had satisfied him that neither entertained one serious thought of the other; and he took, therefore, no interest in their acquaintance, beyond that which was always alive,—a vigilant concern for the manner in which it might operate upon her disposition.

With respect to the Major, he was by no means so entirely at his ease. He saw him still the declared and undisguised pursuer of her favour; and though he perceived, at the same time, she rather avoided than

sought

fought him, he still imagined, in general, his acceptance was arranged, from the many preceding circumstances which had first given him that belief. The whole of her behaviour, nevertheless, perplexed as much as it grieved him, and frequently, in the same half hour, she seemed to him all that was most amiable for inspiring admiration, and all that was least to be depended upon, for retaining attachment.

Yet however, from time to time, he felt alarmed or offended, he never ceased to experience the fondest interest in her happiness, nor the most tender compassion for the dangers with which he saw her environed. He knew, that though her understanding was excellent, her temper was so inconsiderate that she rarely consulted it; and that, though her mind was of the purest innocence, it was unguarded by caution, and unprotected by reflexion. He thought her placed where far higher discretion, far superior experience, might risk being shaken; and he did not more fervently wish, than internally tremble, for her safety. Wherever she appeared, she was sure of distinction: "'Tis Miss Tyrold, the friend of Mrs. Berlington," was buzzed round the moment she was seen; and the particular favour in which she stood with some votaries of the *ton*, made even

even her artlessness, her retired education, and her ignorance of all that pertained to the *certain circles*, past over and forgiven, in consideration of her personal attractions, her youth, and newness.

Still, however, even this celebrity was not what he most dreaded: so sudden and unexpected an elevation upon the heights of fashionable fame might make her head, indeed, giddy, but her heart he thought formed of materials too pure and too good to be endangered so lightly; and though frequently, when he saw her so circumstanced, he feared she was undone for private life, he could not reflect upon her principles and disposition, without soon recovering the belief that a short time might restore her mind to its native simplicity and worth. But another rock was in the way, against which he apprehended she might be dashed, whilst least suspicious of any peril.

This rock, indeed, exhibited nothing to the view that could have affrighted any spectator less anxiously watchful, or less personally interested in regarding it. But youth itself, in the fervour of a strong attachment, is as open-eyed, as observant, and as prophetic as age, with all its concomitants of practice, time, and suspicion. This rock, indeed, far from giving notice of danger
by

by any sharp points or rough prominences displayed only the smoothest and most inviting surface; for it was Mrs. Berlington, the beautiful, the accomplished, the attractive Mrs. Berlington, whom he beheld as the object of the greatest risk she had to encounter.

As he still preserved the character with which she had consented to invest him of her monitor, he seized every opportunity of communicating to her his doubts and apprehensions. But in proportion as her connexion with that lady increased, use to her manners and sentiments abated the wonder they inspired, and they soon began to communicate an unmixed charm, that made all other society, that of Edgar alone excepted, heartless and uninteresting. Yet, in the conversations she held with him from time to time, she frankly related the extraordinary attachment of her new friend to some unknown correspondent, and confessed her own surprise when it first came to her knowledge.

Edgar listened to the account with the most unaffected dismay, and represented the probable danger, and actual impropriety of such an intercourse, in the strongest and most eloquent terms; but he could neither appal her confidence, nor subdue her esteem. The openness with which all had originally
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and voluntarily been avowed, convinced her of the innocence with which it was felt, and all that his exhortations could obtain, was a remonstrance on her own part to Mrs. Berlington.

She found that lady, however, persuaded she indulged but an innocent friendship, which she asserted to be bestowed upon a person of as much honour as merit, and which only with life she should relinquish, since it was the sole consolation of her fettered existence.

Edgar, to whom this was communicated, saw with terror the ascendancy thus acquired over the judgment as well as the affections of Camilla; and became more watchful and more uneasy in observing the progress of this friendship, than all the flattering devoirs of the gay Baronet, or the more serious assiduities of the Major.

Mrs. Berlington, indeed, was no common object, either for fear or for hope, for admiration or for censure. She possessed all that was most softly attractive, most bewitchingly beautiful, and most irresistibly captivating, in mind, person, and manners. But to all that was thus fascinating to others, she joined unhappily all that was most dangerous for herself; an heart the most susceptible, sentiments the most romantic, and an imagination the most escentric. She had been an orphan

orphan from earliest years, and left, with an only brother, to the care of a fanatical maiden aunt, who had taught her nothing but her faith and her prayers; without one single lesson upon good works; or the smallest instruction upon the practical use of her theoretical piety. All that ever varied these studies were some common and ill selected novels and romances; which a young lady in the neighbourhood had privately lent her to read; till her brother, upon his first vacation from the University, brought her the works of the Poets. These, also, it was only in secret she could enjoy; but, to her juvenile fancy, and irregularly principled mind, that did not render them more tasteless. Whatever was most beautifully picturesque in poetry, she saw verified in the charming landscapes presented to her view, in the part of Wales she inhabited; whatever was most noble or tender in romance, she felt promptly in her heart; and whatever was enthusiastic in theology, formed the whole of her idea and her belief with respect to religion.

Brought up thus, to think that all things the most unusual were common, she was romantic, without consciousness, and eccentric without intention. Nothing steady or rational had been instilled into her mind by education; and she was too young, and too fan-
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ciful

ciful to form her own principles with any depth of reflection, or study of propriety. She had entered the world by a sudden and most unequal marriage, in which her choice had no part, with only two self-framed maxims for the law of her conduct. The first of these was, that, from her early ideas of religion, no vestal should be more personally chaste; the second, that, from her more recently imbibed notions of tenderness, her heart, since she was married without its concurrence, was still wholly at liberty to be disposed of by its own propensities, without reproach and without scruple.

With such a character, where virtue had so little guide even while innocence presided; where the person was so alluring, and the situation so open to temptation, Edgar saw with almost every species of concern the daily increasing friendship of Camilla. Yet while he feared for her firmness, he knew not how to blame her fondness; nor where so much was amiable in its object, could he cease to wish that more were right.

Thus again lived and died another week; and the fourth succeeded with no actual occurrence, but a new change of opinion in

in Mrs. Arlbery, that forcibly and cruelly affected the feelings of Camilla.

Uninformed of the motive that occasioned the indifference with which Edgar beheld the newly awakened gallantry of Sir Sedley, and the pleasure with which Camilla received it, Mrs. Arlbery observed his total unconcern, first with surprise, next with perplexity, and finally with a belief he was seriously resolved against forming any connection with her himself. This she took an early opportunity to intimate to Camilla, warmly exhorting her to drive him fast from her mind.

Camilla assured her that no task could be more easy: but the disappointment of the project with respect to Sir Sedley, which she blushed to have adopted, hurt her in every possible direction. Coquetry was as foreign to the ingenuousness of her nature, as to the dignity of all her early maternal precepts. She had hastily encouraged the devoirs of the Baronet, upon the recommendation of a woman she loved and admired; but now, that the failure of her aim brought her to reflexion, she felt penitent and ashamed to have heeded any advice so contrary to the singleness of the doctrines of her father, and so inferior to the elevation of every sentiment she had ever heard from her mother. If Edgar had

had seen her design, he had surely seen it with contempt: and though his manner was still the most gentle, and his advice ever ready and friendly, the opinion of Mrs. Arlbery was corroborated by all her own observations, that he was decidedly estranged from her.

The melancholy that now again took possession of her spirits made her decline going abroad, from a renewed determination to avoid all meetings with Edgar. Mrs. Arlbery felt provoked to find his power thus unabated, and Sir Sedley was astonished. He still saw her perpetually, from his visits at Mount Pleasant; but his vanity, that weakest yet most predominant feature of his character, received a shock for which no modesty of apprehension or forethought had prepared him, in finding that, when he saw her no more, in the presence of Mandiebert, he saw her no more the same. She was ready still to converse with him; but no peculiar attention was flattering, no desire to oblige was pointed. He found he had been merely a passive instrument to excite jealousy; and even as such had been powerless to produce that effect. The raillery which Mrs. Arlbery spared not upon the occasion added greatly to his pique, and his mortification was so visible, that Camilla perceived it, and perceived

ceived it with pain, with shame, and with surprise. She thought now, for the first time, that the public homage he had paid her had private and serious motives, and that what she imagined mere sportive gallantry, arose from a growing attachment.

This idea had no gratifying power; believing Edgar without care for her, she could not hope it would stimulate his regard; and conceiving she had herself excited the partiality by wilful civilities, she could feel only reproach from a conquest unduly, unfairly, uningenuously obtained.

In proportion as the self-upbraidings made her less deserving in her own eyes, the merits of the young Baronet seemed to augment; and in considering herself as culpable for having raised his regard, she appeared before him with a humility that gave a softness to her look and manners, which soon proved as interesting to Sir Sedley as her marked gaiety had been flattering.

When she perceived this, she felt distressed anew. To shun him was impossible, as Mrs. Arlbery not only gave him completely the freedom of her house, but assiduously promoted their belonging always to the same group, and being seated next to each other. There was nothing she would not have done to extenuate her error, and

to obviate its ill effect upon Sir Sedley; but as she always thought herself in the wrong, and regarded him as injured, every effort was accompanied with a timidity that gave to every change a new charm, rather than any repulsive quality.

In this state of total self-disapprobation, to return to Etherington was her only wish, and to pass the intermediate time with Mrs. Berlington became her sole pleasure. But she was forced again into public to avoid an almost single intercourse with Sir Sedley.

In meeting again with Edgar, she saw him openly delighted at her sight, but without the least apparent solicitude or notice that the young Baronet had passed almost the whole of the interval upon Mount Pleasant.

CHAP. IV.

Traits of Instruction.

THE sixth and last week destined for the Tunbridge sojourn was begun, when Mrs. Arlbery once more took her fair young guest apart, and intreated her attention for one final half hour. The time, she said, was fast advancing in which they must return to their respective homes; but she wished to make a full and clear representation of the advantages that might be reaped from this excursion, before the period for gathering them should be past.

She would forbear, she said, entering again upon the irksome subject of the insensibility of Mandlebert, which was, at least, sufficiently glaring to prevent any delusion. But she begged leave to speak of what she believed had less obviously struck her, the apparent promise of a serious attachment from Sir Sedley Clarendel.

Camilla would here instantly have broken up the conversation, but Mrs. Arlbery insisted upon being heard.

"Why," she asked, "should she wilfully destine her youth to a hopeless waste of affection, and dearth of all permanent comfort? To sacrifice every consideration to the honours of constancy might be soothing, and even glorious in this first season of romance; but a very short time would render it vapid; and the epoch of repentance was always at hand to succeed. With the least address, or the least genuine encouragement, it was now palpable she might see Sir Sedley, and his title and fortune, at her feet."

Camilla resentfully interrupted her, disclaiming with Sir Sedley, as with every one else, all possibility of alliance from motives so degrading; and persisted in declaring, that the most moderate subsistence with freedom, would be preferable to the most affluent obtained by any mercenary engagement.

Mrs. Arlbery desired her to recollect that Sir Sedley, though rich even to splendour, was so young, so gay, so handsome, and so pleasant, that she might safely honour him with her hand, yet run no risk of being supposed to have made a merely interested alliance. "I throw out this," she cried, "in conclusion, for your deepest consideration, but I must press it no further. Sir Sedley is evidently charmed

with you at present; and his vanity is so potent, and, like all vanity, so easily assailable, that the smallest food to it, adroitly administered, would secure him your slave for life, and rescue you from the antediluvian courtship of a man, who, if he marries at all, is so deliberate in his progress, that he must reach his grand climacteric before he can reach the altar."

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Far from meditating upon this discourse with any view to following its precepts, Camilla found it necessary to call all her original fondness for Mrs. Arlbery to her aid, to forgive the plainness of her attack, or the worldliness of her notions: and all that rested upon her mind for consideration was her belief in the serious regard of Sir Sedley, which, as she apprehended it to be the work of her own designed exertions, she could only think of with contrition.

These ruminations were interrupted by a call down stairs to see a learned bullfinch. The Dennels and Sir Sedley were present. She met the eyes of the latter with a sensation of shame that quickly deepened her whole face with crimson. He did not

behold it without emotion, and experienced a strong curiosity to define its exact cause.

He addressed himself to her with the most marked distinction; she could scarcely answer him; but her manner was even touchingly gentle. Sir Sedley could not restrain himself from following her in every motion by his eyes; he felt an interest concerning her that surprised him; he began to doubt if it had been indifference which caused her late change; her softness helped his vanity to recover its tone, and her confusion almost confirmed him that Mrs. Arlbery had been mistaken, in rallying his failure of rivalry with Mandlebert.

The bird sung various little airs, upon certain words of command; and mounted his highest, and descended to his lowest perch, and made whatever evolutions were within the circumference of his limited habitation, with wonderful precision.

Camilla, however, was not more pleased by his adroitness, than pained to observe the severe aspect with which his keeper issued his orders. She inquired by what means he had obtained such authority.

The man, with a significant wag of the head, brutally answered, "By the true old way, Miss; I licks him."

"Lick

"Lick him!" repeated she, with disgust; "how is it possible you can beat such a poor delicate little creature?"

"O! easy enough, Miss," replied the man, grinning; "every thing's the better for a little beating, as I tells my wife. There's nothing so fine set, Miss, but what will bear it, more or less."

Sir Sedley asked with what he could strike it, that would not endanger its life.

"That's telling, sir!" cried the man, with a sneer; "howbeit, we've plenty of ill-luck in the trade. No want of that. For one that I rears, I loses six or seven. And sometimes they be so plaguy sulky, they tempt me to give 'em a knock a little matter too hard, and then they'll fall you into a fit; like, and go off in a twinkle."

"And how can you have the cruelty," cried Camilla, indignantly, "to treat in such a manner a poor little inoffensive animal who does not understand what you require?"

"O! yes, a does, miss, they knows what I wants as well as I do myself; only they're so dead tiresome at being shy. Why now this one here, as does all his larning to satisfaction just now, mayhap won't do nothing at all by an hour or two. Why sometimes you may pinch 'em to a mummy before you can make 'em budge."

"Pinch them!" exclaimed she; "do you ever pinch them?"

"Do I? Ay, miss. Why how do you think one larns them dumb creturs? It don't come to 'em natural. They are main dull of themselves. This one as you see here would do nothing at all, if he was not afraid of a tweak."

"Poor unhappy little thing!" cried she; "I hope, at least, now it has learnt so much, its sufferings are over!"

"Yes, yes, he's pretty well off. I always gives him his fill when he's done his day's work. But a little squeak now and then in the intrum does 'em no harm. They're mortal cunning. One's forced to be pretty tough with 'em."

"How should I rejoice," cried Camilla, "to rescue this one poor unoffending and oppressed little animal from such tyranny!" Then, taking out her purse, she desired to know what he would have for it.

The man, as a very great favour, said he would take ten guineas; though it would be his ruin to part with it; as it was all his livelihood; but he was willing to oblige the young lady.

Camilla, with a constrained laugh, but a very natural blush, put up her purse, and said: "Thou must linger on, then, in captivity;

captivity, thou poor little undeserving sufferer, for I cannot help thee !”

Every body protested that ten guineas was an imposition ; and the man offered to part with it for five.

Camilla, who had imagined it would have cost half a guinea, was now more ashamed, because equally incapable to answer such a demand ; she declined, therefore, the composition, and the man was dismissed.

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At night, when she returned to her own room from the play, she saw the little bulfinch, reposing in a superb cage, upon her table.

Delighted first, and next perplexed, she flew to Mrs. Arlbery, and inquired whence it came.

Mrs. Arlbery was as much amazed as herself.

Questions were then asked of the servants ; but none knew, or none would own, how the bird became thus situated.

Camilla could not now doubt but Sir Sedley had given this commission to his servant, who could easily place the cage in her room, from his constant access to the house. She was enchanted to see the little animal relieved from so painful a life, but

hesitated not a moment in resolving to refuse its acceptance.

When Sir Sedley came the next day, she carried it down; and, with a smile of open pleasure, thanked him for giving her so much share in his generous liberality, and asked if he could take it home with him in his carriage, or, if she should send it to his hotel.

Sir Sedley was disappointed, yet felt the propriety of her delicacy and her spirit. He did not deny the step he had taken; but told her that having hastily, from the truth of reflection her compassion had awakened, ordered his servant to follow the man; and buy the bird, he had forgotten, till it arrived, his incapability of taking care of it. His valet was as little at home as himself, and there was small chance, at an inn, that any maid would so carefully watch, as to prevent its falling a prey to the many cats with which it was swarming. He hoped, therefore, till their return to Hampshire, she would take charge of a little animal that owed its deliverance from slavery to her pitying comments.

Camilla, instinctively, would with unfeigned joy have accepted such a trust; but she thought she saw something archly significant in the eye of Mrs. Arlbery, and therefore stammered out, she was afraid she
should

should herself be too little at home to secure its safety.

Sir Sedley, looking extremely blank, said, it would be better to, re-deliver it to the man, brute as he was, than to let it be unprotected; but, where generosity touched Camilla, reflection ever flew her; and off all guard at such an idea, she exclaimed she would rather relinquish going out again while at Tunbridge, than render his humanity abortive; and ran off precipitately with the bird to her chamber.

Mrs. Arlbery, soon following, praised her behaviour; and said, she had sent the Baronet away perfectly happy.

Camilla, much provoked, would now have had the bird conveyed after him; but Mrs. Arlbery assured her, inconsistency in a woman was, as flattering, as in a man it was tedious and alarming; and persuaded her to let the matter rest.

Her mind, however, did not rest at the same time: in the evening, when the Baronet met them at the Rooms, he was not only unusually gay, but looked at her with an air and manner that seemed palpably to mark her as the cause of his satisfaction.

In the deepest disturbance, she considered herself now to be in a difficulty the most delicate; she could not come forward to clear it up, without announcing expecta-

tions from his partiality which he had never authorised by any declaration; nor yet suffer such symptoms of his believing it welcome to pass unnoticed, without risking the reproach of using him ill, when she made known, at a later period, her indifference.

Mrs. Arlbery would not aid her, for she thought the embarrassment might lead to a termination the most fortunate. To consult with Edgar was her first wish; but how open such a subject? The very thought, however, gave her an air of solicitude when he spoke to her, that struck him, and he watched for an opportunity to say, "You have not, I hope, forgotten my province?—May I, in my permitted office, ask a few questions?"

"O yes!" cried she, with alacrity; "And, when they are asked, and when I have answered them, if you should not be too much tired, may I ask some in my turn?"

"Of me!" cried he, with the most gratified surprise.

"Not concerning yourself!" answered she, blushing; "but upon something which a little distresses me."

"When, and where may it be?" cried he, while a thousand conjectures rapidly succeeded to each other; "may I call upon Mrs. Arlbery to-morrow morning?"

"O no!

"O no! we shall be, I suppose, here again at night," she answered; dreading arranging a visit Mrs. Arlbery would treat, she knew, with raillery the most unmerciful.

There was time for no more, as that lady, suddenly tired, led the way to the carriage. Edgar followed her to the door, hoping and fearing, at once, every thing that was most interesting from a confidence so voluntary and so unexpected.

Camilla was still more agitated; for though uncertain if she were right or wrong in the appeal she meant to make, to converse with him openly, to be guided by his counsel, and to convince him of her superiority to all mercenary allurements were pleasures to make her look forward to the approaching conference with almost trembling delight.

CHAP. V.

A Demander.

THE next night, as the carriage was at the door, and the party preparing for the Rooms, the name of Mr. Tyrold was announced, and Lionel entered the parlour.

His manner was hurried, though he appeared gay and frisky as usual; Camilla felt a little alarmed; but Mrs. Arlbery asked if he would accompany them.

With all his heart, he answered, only he must first have a moment's chat with his sister. Then, saying they should have a letter to write together, he called for a pen and ink, and was taking her into another apartment, when Mr. Dannel objected to letting his horses wait.

"Send them back for us, then," cried Lionel, with his customary ease, "and we will follow you."

Mr. Dannel again objected to making his horses so often mount the hill; but Lionel assuring him nothing was so good for them, ran on with so many farrier words and phrases of the benefit they would reap from

from such light evening exercise, that, persuaded he was master of the subject, Mr. Dennel submitted, and the brother and sister were left *tête à-tête*.

At any other time, Camilla would have proposed giving up the Rooms entirely: but her desire to see Edgar, and the species of engagement she had made with him, counterbalanced every inconvenience.

"My dear girl," said Lionel, "I am come to beg a favour. You see this pen and ink. Give me a sheet of paper."

She fetched him one.

"That's a good child," cried he, patting her cheek; "so now sit down, and write a short letter for me. Come, begin, Dear Sir."

She wrote—Dear Sir.

"An unforeseen accident,—write on,—an unforeseen accident has reduced me to immediate distress for two hundred pounds—."

Camilla let her pen drop, exclaiming, "Lionel! is this possible?"

"Very possible, my dear. You know I told you I wanted another hundred before you left Cleves. So you must account it only as one hundred, in fact, at present."

"O Lionel, Lionel!" cried Camilla, clasping her hands, with a look of more remon-

remonstrance than any words she durst utter.

"Won't you write the letter?" said he, pretending not to observe her emotion.

"To whom is it to be addressed?"

"My uncle, to be sure, my dear! What can you be thinking of? Are you in love, Camilla?"

"My uncle again? no Lionel!—I have solemnly engaged myself to apply to him no more."

"That was, for me, my dear; but where can your thoughts be wandering? Why you must ask for this as if it were for yourself."

"For myself!"

"Yes, certainly. You know he won't give it else."

"Impossible! what should I want two hundred pounds for?"

"O a thousand things, say you must have some new gowns and caps, and hats and petticoats, and all those kind of gear. There is not the least difficulty; you can easily persuade him they are all worn out at such a place as this. Besides, I'll tell you what is still better; say you've been robbed; he'll soon believe it, for he thinks all public places filled with sharpers."

"Now you relieve me," said she, with a sort of fearful smile, "for I am sure you cannot

cannot be serious. You must be very certain I would not deceive or delude my uncle for a million of worlds."

"You know nothing of life, child, nothing at all. However, if you won't say that, tell him it's for a secret purpose. At least you can do that. And then, you can make him understand he must ask no questions about the matter. The money is all we want from him."

"This is so idle, Lionel, that I hope you speak it for mere nonsense. Who could demand such a sum, and refuse to account for its purpose?"

"Account, my dear! Does being an uncle give a man a right to be impertinent? If it does, marry out of hand yourself, there's a good girl, and have a family at once, that I may share the same privilege. I shall like it of all things; who will you have?"

"Pho, pho!"

"Major Cerwood?"

"No, never!"

"I once thought Edgar Mandlebert had a sneaking kindness for you. But I believe it is gone off. Or else I was out."

This was not an observation to exhilarate her spirits. She sighed: but Lionel, concluding himself the cause, begged her not
to

to be low-spirited, but to write the letter at once.

She assured him she could never again consent to interfere in his unreasonable requests.

He was undone, then, he said; for he could not live without the money.

"Rather say, not with it," cried she; "for you keep nothing!"

"Nobody does, my dear; we all go on the same way now-a-days."

"And what do you mean to be the end of it all, Lionel? How do you purpose living when all these resources are completely exhausted?"

"When I am ruined, you mean? why, how do other people live when they're ruined? I can but do the same; though I have not much considered the matter."

"Do consider it, then, dear Lionel! for all our sakes, do consider it!"

"Well,—let us see.—"

"O, I don't mean so; I don't mean just now; in this mere idle manner.—"

"O yes, I'll do it at once, and then it will be over. Faith I don't well know. I have no great *gusto* for blowing out my brains. I like the little dears mighty well where they are. And I can't say I shall much relish to consume my life and prime,
and

and vigour in the king's bench prison. 'Tis horribly tiresome to reside always on the same spot. Nor have I any great disposition to whisk off to another country. Old England's a pretty place enough. I like it very well;—with a little rhino understood! But 'tis the very deuce with an empty purse. So write the letter, my dear girl."

"And is this your consideration, Lionel? And is this its conclusion?"

"Why what signifies dwelling upon such dismalities? If I think upon my ruin beforehand, I am no nearer to enjoyment now than then. Live while we live, my dear girl! I hate prophesying horrors. Write; I say, write!"

Again she absolutely refused, pleading her promise to her uncle, and declaring she would keep her word.

"Keep a fiddlestick!" cried he, impatiently; "you don't know what mischief you may have to answer for! you may bring misery upon all our heads! you may make my father banish me his sight, you may make my mother execrate me!—"

"Good Heaven!" cried Camilla, interrupting him, "what is it you talk of? what is it you mean?"

"Just what I say; and to make you understand me better, I'll give you a hint of the truth; but you must lose your life
twenty

twenty times before you reveal it—There's—there's—do you hear me?—there's a pretty girl in the case!”

“A pretty girl!—And what has that to do with this rapacity for money?”

“What an innocent question! why what a baby thou art, my dear Camilla!”

“I hope you are not forming any connexion unknown to my father?”

“Ha, ha, ha!” cried Lionel, laughing loud: “Why thou hast lived in that old parsonage-house till thou art almost too young to be rocked in a cradle.”

“If you are entering into any engagement,” said she, still more gravely, “that my father must not know, and that my mother would so bitterly condemn,—why am I to be trusted with it?”

“You understand nothing of these things, child. 'Tis the very nature of a father to be an hunk, and of a mother to be a bore.”

“O Lionel! such a father!—such a mother!—”

“As to their being perfectly good, and all that, I know it very well. And I am very sorry for it. A good father is a very serious misfortune to a poor lad like me, as the world runs; it causes one such confounded gripes of the conscience for every little awkward thing one does! A bad father

ther

ther would be the joy of my life ; 'twould be all fair play there ; the more he was choused the better."

" But this pretty girl, Lionel !—Are you serious ? Are you really engaging yourself ? And is she so poor ? Is she so much distressed, that you require these immense and frequent sums for her ?"

Lionel laughed again, 'and rubbed' his hands ; but after a short silence assumed a more steady countenance, and said, " Don't ask me any thing about her. It is not fit you should be so curious. And don't give a hint of the matter to a soul. Mind that ! But as to the money, I must have it. And directly : I shall be blown to the deuce else."

" Lionel !" cried Camilla, shrinking, " you make me tremble ! you cannot surely be so wicked—so unprincipled—No ! your connexions are never worse than imprudent !—you would not else be so unkind, so injurious as to place in me such a confidence !"

The whole face of Lionel now flashed with shame, and he walked about the room, muttering : " 'Tis true, I ought not to have done it." And soon after, with still greater concern, he exclaimed : " If this appears to you in such a heinous light, what
will

will my father think of it? And how can I bear to let it be known to my mother?"

"O never, never!" cried she emphatically; "never let it reach the knowledge of either! If indeed you have been so inconsiderate, and so wrong—break up, at least, any such intercourse before it offends their ears."

"But how, my dear, can I do that, if it gets blazed abroad?"

"Blazed abroad!"

"Yes; and for want only of a few pitiful guineas."

"What can you mean? How can it depend upon a few guineas?"

"Get me the guineas;—and leave the how to me."

"My dear Lionel," cried she, affectionately, "I would do any thing that is not absolutely improper to serve you; but my uncle has now nothing more to spare; he has told me so himself; and with what courage, then, in this dark, mysterious, and, I fear, worse than mysterious business, can I apply to him?"

"My dear child, he only wants to hoard up his money to shew off poor Eugenia at her marriage; and you know as well as I do what a ninny he is for his pains; for what a poor little dowdy thing will she look, dizenized out in jewels and laces?"

"Can

“ Can you speak so of Eugenia? the most amiable, the most deserving, the most excellent creature breathing !”

“ I speak it in pure friendship. I would not have her exposed. I love dear little Greek and Latin as well as you do. Only the difference is, I don't talk so like an old woman; and really when you do it yourself, you can't think the ridiculous effect it has, when one looks at your young face. However, only write the request as if from yourself, and tell him you'll acquaint him with the reason next letter; but that the post is just going out now, and you have time for no more. And then, just coax him over a little, with, how you long to be back, and how you hate Tunbridge, and how you adore Cleves, and how tired you are for want of his bright conversation,—and you may command half his fortune.—My dear Camilla, you don't know from what destruction you will rescue me! Think too of my father, and what a shock you will save him: And think of my mother, whom I can never see again if you won't help me !”

Camilla sighed, but let him put the pen into her hand, whence, however, the very next moment's reflection was urging her to cast it down, when he caught her in his arms in a transport of joy, called her his protectress

protectress from dishonour and despair, and said he would run to the Rooms while she wrote, just to take the opportunity of seeing them, and to un-order the carriage, that she might have no interruption to her composition, which he would come back to claim before the party returned, as he must set off for Cleves, and gallop all night, to procure the money, which the loss of a single day would render useless.

All this he uttered with a rapidity that mocked every attempt at expostulation or answer; and then ran out of the room and out of the house.

* * * *

Horror at such perpetual and increasing ill conduct, grief at the compulsive failure of meeting Edgar, and perplexity how to extricate herself from her half given, but wholly seized upon engagement to write, took for a while nearly equal shares in tormenting Camilla. But all presently centred in one domineering sentiment of sharp repentance for what she had apparently undertaken.

To claim two hundred pounds of her uncle, in her own name, was out of all question. She could not, even a moment, dwell upon such a project; but how represent

sent what she herself so little understood as the necessity of Lionel? or how ask for so large a sum, and postpone, as he desired, all explanation? She was incapable of any species of fraud, she detested even the most distant disguise. Simple supplication seemed, therefore, her only method; but so difficult was even this, in an affair so dark and unconscionable, that she began twenty letters without proceeding in any one of them beyond two lines.

Thus far, however, her task was light to what it appeared to her upon a little further deliberation. That her brother had formed some unworthy engagement or attachment, he had not, indeed, avowed clearly, but he had by no means denied, and she had even omitted, in her surprise and consternation, exacting his promise that it should immediately be concluded. What, then, might she be doing by endeavouring to procure this money? Aiding perhaps vice and immorality, and assisting her misguided, if not guilty brother, to persevere in the most dangerous errors, if not crimes?

She shuddered, she pushed away her paper, she rose from the table, she determined not to write another word.

Yet, to permit parents she justly revered to suffer any evil she had the smallest chance to spare them, was dreadful to her; and

what evil could be inflicted upon them, so deeply, so lastingly severe, as the conviction of any serious vices in any of their children?

This, for one minute, brought her again to the table; but the next, her better judgment pointed out the shallowness and fallacy of such reasoning. To save them present pain at the risk of future anguish, to consult the feelings of her brother, in preference to his morality, would be forgetting every lesson of her life, which, from its earliest dawn, had imbibed a love of virtue, that made her consider whatever was offensive to it as equally disgusting and unhappy.

To disappoint Lionel was, however, terrible. She knew well he would be deaf to remonstrance, ridicule all argument, and laugh off whatever she could urge by persuasion. She feared he would be quite outrageous to find his expectations thus thwarted; and the lateness of the hour when he would hear it, and the weight he annexed to obtaining the money expeditiously, redoubled at once her regret for her momentary compliance, and her pity for what he would undergo through its failure.

After considering in a thousand ways how to soften to him her recantation, she found herself so entirely without courage to encounter his opposition, that she resolved to
write

write him a short letter, and then retire to her room, to avoid an interview.

In this, she besought him to forgive her error in not sooner being sensible of her duty, which upon her first reflexion had taught her the impossibility of demanding two hundred pounds for herself, who wanted nothing; and the impracticability of demanding it for him, in so unintelligible a manner.

Thus far only she had proceeded, from the length of time consumed in regret and rumination, when a violent ringing at the door, without the sound of any carriage, made her start up, and fly to her chamber; leaving her unfinished letter, with the beginnings of her several essays to address Sir Hugh, upon the table, to shew her various efforts to her brother, and to explain that they were relinquished.

CHAP. VI.

An Accorder.

THUS, self-confined and almost in an agony, Camilla remained for a quarter of an hour, without any species of interruption, and in the greatest amazement that Lionel forbore pursuing her, either with letter or message.

Another violent ringing at the bell, but still without any carriage, then excited her attention, and presently the voice and steps of Lionel resounded upon the stairs, whence her name was with violence vociferated.

She did not move; and in another minute, he was rapping at her chamber door, demanding admittance, or that she would instantly descend.

Alarmed for her open letter and papers, she inquired who was in the parlour.

“Not a soul,” he answered; “I have left them all at the Rooms.”

“Have you returned, then, twice?”

“No. I should have been here sooner, but I met two or three old cronies, that
would

would not part with me. Come, where's your letter?"

"Have you not seen what I have written?"

Down upon this intimation he flew, without any reply; but was presently back, saying he found nothing in the parlour, except a letter to herself.

Affrighted, she followed him; but not one of her papers remained. The table was cleared, and nothing was to be seen but a large packet, addressed to Miss Camilla Tyrold, in a hand she did not know.

She rang to inquire who had been in the house before her brother.

The servant answered, only Sir Sedley Clarendel, who he thought had been there still, as he had said he should wait till Mrs. Arlbery came home.

"Is it possible," cried she, "that a gentleman such as Sir Sedley Clarendel, can have permitted himself to touch my papers?"

Lionel agreed that it was shocking; but said the loss of time to himself was still worse; without suffering her, therefore, to open her packet, he insisted that she should write another letter directly; adding, he had met the Baronet in his way from the Rooms, but had little suspected whence he came, or how he had been amusing himself.

Camilla now hung about her brother in the greatest tribulation, but refused to take the pen he would have put into her hands, and, at last, not without tears, said: "Forgive me, Lionel! but the papers you ought to have found would have explained—that I cannot write for you to my uncle."

Lionel heard this with the indignation of an injured man. He was utterly, he said, lost; and his family would be utterly disgraced, for ruin must be the lot of his father, or exile or imprisonment must be his own, if she persisted in such unkind and unnatural conduct.

Terrour now bereft her of all speech or motion, till the letter, which Lionel had been beating about in his agitation, without knowing or caring what he was doing, burst open, and some written papers fell to the floor, which she recognised for her own.

Much amazed, she seized the cover, which had only been fastened by a wafer that was still wet, and saw a letter within it to herself, which she hastily read, while a paper that was enclosed dropt down, and was caught by Lionel.

To Miss Camilla Tyrold.

FORGIVE, fairest Camilla, the work of the Destinies. I came hither to see if illness

ness detained you; the papers which I enclose from other curious eyes caught mine by accident. The pathetic sisterly address has touched me. I have not the honour to know Mr. Lionel Tyrold; let our acquaintance begin with an act of confidence on his part, that must bind to him for ever his lovely sister's

Most obedient and devoted

SEDLEY CLARENDEL.

The loose paper, picked up by Lionel, was a draft, upon a banker, for two hundred pounds.

While this, with speechless emotion, was perused by Camilla, Lionel, with unbounded joy, began jumping, skipping, leaping over every chair, and capering round and round the room in an ecstasy.

"My dearest Lionel," cried she, when a little recovered, "why such joy? you cannot suppose it possible this can be accepted."

"Not accepted, child? do you think I am out of my senses? Don't you see me freed from all my misfortunes at once? and neither my father grieved, nor my mother offended, nor poor numps fleeced?"

"And when can you pay it? And what do you mean to do? And to whom will be

the obligation? Weigh, weigh a little all this."

Lionel heard her not; his rapture was too buoyant for attention, and he whisked every thing out of its place, from frantic merriment, till he put the apartment into so much disorder, that it was hardly practicable to stir a step in it; now and then interrupting himself to make her low bows, scraping his feet all over the room, and obsequiously saying: "My sister Clarendel! How does your La'ship do? my dear Lady Clarendel, pray afford me your La'ship's countenance."

Nothing could be less pleasant to Camilla than raillery which pointed out, that, even by the unreflecting Lionel, this action could be ascribed to but one motive. The draft, however, had fallen into his hands, and neither remonstrance nor petition, neither representation of impropriety nor persuasion, could induce him to relinquish it; he would only dance, sing, and pay her grotesque homage, till the coach stopt at the door; and then, ludicrously hoping her Ladyship would excuse his leaving her, for once, to play the part of the house-maid in setting the room to rights, he sprang past them all, and bounded down the hill.

Mrs. Arlbery was much diverted by the confusion in the parlour, and Miss Dannel
asked

asked a thousand questions why the chairs and tables were all thrown down, the china jars removed from the chimney-piece into the middle of the room, and the side-board apparatus put on the chimney-piece in their stead.

Camilla was too much confounded either to laugh or explain, and, hastily wishing them good-night, retired to her chamber.

Here, in the extremest perturbation, she saw the full extent of her difficulties, without perceiving any means of extrication. She had no hope of recovering the draft from Lionel, whom she had every reason to conclude already journeying from Tunbridge. What could she say the next day to Sir Sedley? How account for so sudden, so gross an acceptance of pecuniary obligation? What inference might he not draw? And how could she undeceive him, while retaining so improper a mark of his dependence upon her favour? The displeasure she felt that he should venture to suppose she would owe to him such a debt, rendered but still more palpable the species of expectation it might authorise.

To destroy this illusion occupied all her attention, except what was imperiously seized upon by regret of missing Edgar, to consult with whom was more than ever her wish.

In this disturbed state, when she saw Mrs. Arlbery the next morning, her whole care was to avoid being questioned: and that lady, who quickly perceived her fears by her avoidance, took the first opportunity to say to her, with a laugh, " I see I must make no inquiries into the gambols of your brother last night: but I may put together, perhaps, certain circumstances that may give me a little light into the business: and if, as I conjecture, Clarendel spoke out to him, his wildest rioting is more rational than his sister's gravity."

Camilla protested they had not conversed together at all.

" Nay, then, I own myself still in the dark. But I observed that Clarendel left the Rooms at a very early hour, and that your brother almost immediately followed."

Camilla ventured not any reply; and soon after retreated.

Mrs. Arlbery, in a few minutes, pursuing her, laughingly, and with sportive reproach, accused her of intending to steal a march to the altar of Hymen; as she had just been informed, by her maid, that Sir Sedley had actually been at the house last night, during her absence.

Camilla seriously assured her, that she was in her chamber when he arrived, and had not seen him.

" For

“ For what in the world, then, could he come ? He was sure I was not at home, for he had left me at the Rooms ? ”

Camilla again was silent ; but her tingling cheeks proclaimed it was not for want of something to say. Mrs. Arlbery forbore to press the matter further ; but forbore with a nod that implied *I see how it is !* and a smile that published the pleasure and approbation which accompanied her self-conviction.

The vexation of Camilla would have prompted an immediate confession of the whole mortifying transaction, had she not been endued with a sense of honour where the interests of others was concerned, that repressed her natural precipitance, and was more powerful even than her imprudence.

She waited the greatest part of the morning in some little faint hope of seeing Lionel : but he came not, and she spent the rest of it with Mrs. Berlinton. She anxiously wished to meet Edgar in the way, to apologise for her non-appearance the preceding evening ; but this did not happen ; and her chagrin was not lessened by reflecting upon the superior interest in her health and welfare marked by Sir Sedley, who had taken the trouble to walk from the Rooms to Mount Pleasant to see what was become of her.

She returned home but barely in time to dress for dinner, and was not yet ready, when she saw the carriage of the Baronet drive up to the door.

In the most terrible confusion how to meet him, what to say about the draft, how to mention her brother, whether to seem resentful of the liberty he had so unceremoniously taken, or thankful for its kindness, she had hardly the force to attire herself, nor, when summoned down stairs, to descend.

This distress was but increased upon her entrance, by the sight and the behaviour of the Baronet; whose address to her was so marked, that it covered her with blushes, and whose air had an assurance that spoke a species of secret triumph. Offended as well as frightened, she turned every way to avoid him, or assumed a look of haughtiness, when forced by any direct speech to answer him. She soon, however, saw, by his continued self-complacency, and even an increase of gaiety, that he only regarded this as coquetry, or bashful embarrassment, since every time she attempted thus to rebuff him, an arch smile stole over his features, that displayed his different conception of her meaning.

She now wished nothing so much as a prompt and positive declaration, that she

might convince him of his mistake and her rejection. For this purpose, she subdued her desire of retreat, and spent the whole afternoon with Mrs. Arlbery and the Deniels in his company.

Nevertheless, when Mrs. Arlbery, who had the same object in view, though with a different conclusion, contrived to draw her other guests out of the apartment and to leave her alone with Sir Sedley, modesty and shame both interfered with her desire of an explanation, and she was hastily retiring; but the Baronet, in a gentle voice, called after her, "Are you going?"

"Yes; I have forgotten something.—"

He rose to follow her, with a motion that seemed purporting to take her hand; but, gliding quickly on, she prevented him, and was almost at the same moment in her own chamber.

With augmented severity, she now felt the impropriety of an apparent acceptance of so singular and unpleasing an obligation, which obviously misled Sir Sedley to believe her at his command.

Shocked in her delicacy, and stung in her best notions of laudable pride, she could not rest without destroying this humiliating idea; and resolved to apply to Edgar for the money, and to pay the Baronet the next day. Her objections to betraying the extravagance

travagance of Lionel, though great and sincere, yielded to the still more dangerous evil of letting Sir Sedley continue in an error, that might terminate in branding her in his opinion, with a character of duplicity.

Edgar, too, so nearly a brother to them both, would guard the secret of Lionel better, in all probability, than he would guard it himself; and could draw no personal inferences from the trust, when he found its sole incitement was sooner to owe an obligation to a ward of her father, than to a new acquaintance of her own.

Pleased at the seeming necessity of an application that would lead so naturally to a demand of the counsel she languished to claim, she determined not to suffer Sir Sedley to wait even another minute under his mistake; but, since she now could speak of returning the money, to take courage for meeting what might either precede or ensue in a conference.

Down, therefore, she went; but as she opened the parlour door, she heard Sir Sedley say to Mrs. Arlbery, "O, fie! fie! you know she will be cruel to excruciation! you know me destined to despair to the last degree."

Camilla, whose so speedy re-appearance was the last sight he expected, was too far
advanced

advanced to retreat; and the resentment that tinged her whole complexion shewed she had heard what he said, and had heard it with an application the most offensive.

An immediate sensibility to his own impertinence now succeeded its vain display; he looked not merely concerned, but contrite; and, in a voice softened nearly to timidity, attempted a general conversation, but kept his eyes, with an anxious expression, almost continually fixed upon hers.

Anger with Camilla was a quick, but short-lived sensation; and this sudden change in the Baronet from conceit to respect, produced a change equally sudden in herself from disdain to inquietude. Though mortified in the first moment by his vanity, it was less seriously painful to her than any belief that under it was couched a disposition toward a really steady regard. With Mrs. Arlbery she was but slightly offended, though certain she had been assuring him of all the success he could demand: her way of thinking upon the subject had been openly avowed, and she did justice to the kindness of her motives.

No opportunity, however, arose to mention the return of the draft; Mrs. Arlbery saw displeasure in her air, and not doubting she had heard what had dropt from Sir Sedley, thought the moment unfavourable
for

for a *ôte-à-ôte*, and resolutely kept her place, till Camilla herself, weary of useless waiting, left the room.

Following her then to her chamber, "My dear Miss Tyrold," she cried, "do not let your extreme youth stand in the way of all your future life. A Baronet, rich, young, and amiable, is upon the very point of becoming your slave for ever; yet, because you discover him to be a little restive in the last agonies of his liberty, you are eager, in the high-flown disdain of juvenile susceptibility, to cast him and his fortune away; as if both were such every-day baubles, that you might command or reject them without thought of future consequence."

"Indeed no, dear madam; I am not actuated by pride or anger; I owe too much to Sir Sedley to feel either above a moment, even where I think them—pardon me!—justly excited. But I should ill pay my debt, by accepting a lasting attachment, where certain I can return nothing but lasting, eternal, unchangeable indifference."

"You sacrifice, then, both him and yourself, to the fanciful delicacy of a first love?"

Camilla again denied the charge, and strove to prevail with her to undeceive the
Baronet

Baronet from any false expectations. But she protested she would not be accessory to so much after-repentance; and left her.

The business now wore a very serious aspect to Camilla. Mrs. Arlbery avowed she thought Sir Sedley in earnest, and he knew she had herself heard him speak with security of his success. The bulfinch had gone far, but the draft seemed to have riveted the persuasion. The bird it was now impossible to return till her departure from Tunbridge; but she resolved not to defer another moment putting upon her brother alone the obligation of the draft, to stop the further progress of such dangerous inference.

Hastily, therefore, she wrote to him the following note:

To Sir Sedley Clarendel, Bart.

SIR,

SOME particular business compelled my brother so abruptly to quit Tunbridge, that he could not have the honour to first wait upon you with his thanks for the loan you so unexpectedly put into his hands; by mine, however, all will be restored to-mor-

ROW.

row morning, except his gratitude for your kindness.

I am, Sir, in both our names,
Your obliged humble servant,
CAMILLA TYROLD.

MOUNT PLEASANT,
Thursday Evening.

She now waited till she was summoned down stairs to the carriage, and then gave her little letter to a servant, whom she desired to deliver it to Sir Sedley's man.

Sir Sedley did not accompany them to the Rooms, but promised to follow.

Camilla, on her arrival, with palpitating pleasure, looked round for Edgar. She did not, however, see him. She was accosted directly by the Major; who, as usual, never left her, and whose assiduity to seek her favour seemed increased.

She next joined Mrs. Berlinton; but still she saw nothing of Edgar. Her eyes incessantly looked towards the door, but the object they sought never met them.

When Sir Sedley entered, he joined the group of Mrs. Berlinton.

Camilla tried to look at him and to speak to him with her customary civility and cheerfulness, and nearly succeeded; but in him she observed only an expressive attention, without any marks of presumption.

Thus

Thus began and thus ended the evening. Edgar never appeared.

Camilla was in the utmost amazement and deepest vexation. Why did he stay away? was his wrath so great at her own failure the preceding night, that he purposely avoided her? what, also, could she do with Sir Sedley? how meet him the next morning without the draft she had now promised?

In this state of extreme chagrin, when she retired to her chamber, she found the following letter upon her table:

To Miss Camilla Tyrold.

- CAN you think of such a trifle? or deem wealth so truly contemptible, as to deny it all honourable employment? Ah, rather, enchanting Camilla! deign further to aid me in dispensing it worthily!

SEDLEY CLARENDEL.

Camilla now was touched, penetrated, and distressed. She looked upon this letter as a positive intimation of the most serious designs; and all his good qualities, as painted by Mrs. Arlbery, with the very singular obligation she owed to him, rose up formidably

midably to support the arguments and remonstrances of that lady; though every feeling of her heart, every sentiment of her mind, and every wish of her soul, opposed their smallest weight.

CHAP. VII.

An Assistant.

THE next morning, as Camilla had accompanied Mrs. Berlinton, in earnest discourse, from her chamber to the hall, she heard the postman pronounce her name as he gave in a letter. She seized it, saw the hand-writing of Lionel, and ran eagerly into the parlour, which was empty, to read it, in some hopes it would at least contain an acknowledgment of the draft that might be shewn to Sir Sedley, and relieve her from the pain of continuing the principal in such an affair.

The letter, however, was merely a sportive rhapsody, beginning, *My dear Lady Clarendel*; desiring her favour and protection, and telling her he had done what he could for her honour, by adding two trophies to the victorious car of Hymen, driven by the happy Baronet.

Wholly at a loss how to act, she sat ruminating upon this letter, till Mrs. Arlbery opened the door. Having no time to fold it, and dreading her seeing the first words, she

she threw her handkerchief, which was then in her hand, over it, upon the table, hoping presently to draw it away unperceived.

"My dear friend," said Mrs. Arlbery, "I am glad to see you a moment alone. Do you know any thing of Mandlebert?"

"No!" answered she affrighted, lest any evil had happened.

"Did he not take leave of you at the Rooms the other night?"

"Leave of me? is he gone any where?"

"He has left Tunbridge."

Camilla remained stupified.

"Left it," she continued, "without the poor civility of a call, to ask if you had any letters or messages for Hampshire?"

Camilla coloured high; she felt to her heart this evident coldness, and she knew it to be still more marked than Mrs. Arlbery could divine; for he was aware she wished particularly to speak with him; and though she had failed in her appointment, he had not inquired why.

"And this is the man for whom you would relinquish all mankind? this is the grateful character who is to render you insensible to every body?"

The disturbed mind of Camilla needed not this speech; her debt to Sir Sedley, cast wholly upon her test by the thoughtless Lionel; her inability to pay it, the impres-
five

five lines the Baronet had addressed to her, and the cruel and pointed indifference of Edgar, all forcibly united to make her wish, at this moment, her heart at her own disposal.

In a few minutes, the voice of Sir Sedley, gaily singing, caught her ear. He was entering the hall, the street-door being open. She started up; Mrs. Arlbery would have detained her, but she could not endure to encounter him, and without returning his salutation, or listening to his address, crossed him in the hall, and flew up stairs.

There, however, she had scarcely taken breath, when she recollected the letter which she had left upon the table, and which the afflicting intelligence that Edgar had quitted Tunbridge, had made her forget she had received. In a terror immeasurable, lest her handkerchief should be drawn aside, and betray the first line, she re-descended the stairs, and hastily entered the room. Her shock was then inexpressible. The handkerchief, which her own quick motion in retiring had displaced, was upon the floor, the letter was in full view; the eyes of Sir Sedley were fixed upon his own name, with a look indefinable between pleasure and impertinence; and Mrs. Arlbery was laughing with all her might.

She

She seized the letter, and was running away with it, when Mrs. Arlbery slipped out of the room, and Sir Sedley, shutting the door, half archly, half tenderly repeated, from the letter, "My dear Lady Clarendel!"

In a perfect agony, she hid her face, exclaiming: "O Lionel! my foolish—cruel brother!"—

"Not foolish, not cruel, I think him," cried Sir Sedley, taking her hand, "but amiable—he has done honour to my name, and he will use it, I hope, henceforth, as his own."

"Forget, forget his flippancy," cried she, withdrawing impatiently her hand; "and pardon his sister's breach of engagement for this morning. I hope soon, very soon, to repair it, and I hope—"

She did not know what to add; she stopt, stammered, and then endeavoured to make her retreat.

"Do not go," cried he, gently detaining her; "incomparable Camilla! I have a thousand things to say to you. Will you not hear them?"

"No!" cried she, disengaging herself; "no, no, no! I can hear nothing!"

"Do you fascinate then," said he, half reproachfully, "like the rattlesnake, only to destroy?"

Camilla

Camilla conceived this as alluding to her recent encouragement, and stood trembling with expectation it would be followed by a claim upon her justice.

But Sir Sedley, who was far from any meaning so pointed, lightly added; "What thus agitates the fairest of creatures? can she fear a poor captive entangled in the witchery of her loveliness, and only the more enslaved the more he struggles to get free?"

"Let me go," cried she, eager to stop him; "I beseech you, Sir Sedley!"

"All beauteous Camilla!" answered he, retreating, yet still so as to intercept her passage; "I am bound to submit; but when may I see you again?"

"At any time," replied she hastily; "only let me pass now!"

"At any time? adorable Camilla! be it then to-night!—be it this evening!—be it at noon—be it—"

"No, no, no, no!" cried she, panting with shame and alarm; "I do not mean at any time! I spoke without thought—I mean—"

"Speak so ever and anon," cried he, "if thought is my enemy! This evening then—"

He stopt, as if irresolute how to finish his phrase, but soon added: "Adieu; till

this evening, adieu!" and opened the door for her to pass.

Triumph sat in his eye; exultation spoke in every feature; yet his voice betrayed constraint, and seemed checked, as if from fear of entrusting it with his sentiments. The fear, however, was palpably not of diffidence with respect to Camilla, but of indecision with regard to himself.

Camilla, almost sinking with shame, now hung back, from a dread of leaving him in this dangerous delusion. She sat down, and in a faltering voice, said: "Sir Sedley! hear me, I beg!"

"Hear you!" cried he, gallantly casting himself at her feet; "yes! from the fervid rays of the sun, to the mild lustre of the moon!—from—"

A loud knock at the street door, and a ringing at the same time at the bell, made him rise, meaning to shut again the door of the parlour; but he was prevented, by the entrance of a man into the hall, calling out, in a voice that reached to every part of the house, "An express for Miss Camilla Tyrold."

Camilla started up, concluding it some strange intelligence concerning Edgar. But a letter was put into her hand, and she saw it was the writing of Lavinia.

It

It was short, but most affectionate. It told her that news was just arrived from the Continent, which gave reason for hourly expectation of their cousin Lynmere at Cleves, in consequence of which Sir Hugh was assembling all the family to receive him. She was then, with her father, going thither from Etherington, where the restored health of her uncle had, for a week past, enabled them to reside, and she was ordered to send off an express to Tunbridge, to beg Camilla would prepare immediately for the post-chaise of Sir Hugh, which would reach Mount Pleasant within a few hours after this notice.

A hundred questions assailed Camilla when she had run over this letter, the noise of the express having brought Mrs. Arlbery and the Dennels into the parlour.

She produced the letter, and putting it into the hands of Mrs. Arlbery, relieved her painful confusion, by quitting the room without again meeting the eyes of Sir Sedley.

She could make no preparation, however, for her journey, from mingled desire and fear of an explanation with the Baronet before her departure.

Again, therefore, in a few minutes she went down, gathering courage from the

horror of a mistake that might lead to so much mischief.

She found only Mrs. Arlbery in the parlour.

Involuntarily starting, "Where," she cried, "is Sir Sedley?"

"He is gone," answered Mrs. Arlbery, laughing at her earnestness; "but no doubt you will soon see him at Cleves."

"Then I am undone!" cried she, bursting into tears, and running back to her chamber.

Mrs. Arlbery instantly followed, and kindly inquired what disturbed her.

"O, Mrs. Arlbery!" she cried, "lend me, I beseech you, some aid, and spare me, in pity, your raillery! Sir Sedley, I fear, greatly mistakes me; set him right, I conjure you—"

"Me, my dear? and do you think if some happy fatality is at work at this moment to force you to your good, I will come forth, like your evil genius, to counteract its operations?"

"I must write, then—yet, in this haste, this confusion, I fear to involve rather than extricate myself!"

"Ay, write by all means; there is nothing so prettily forwards these affairs, as a correspondence between the parties undertaken to put an end to them."

She

She went, laughing, out of the chamber; and Camilla, who had seized a pen, distressfully flung it from her.

What indeed could she say? he had made no direct declaration; she could give, therefore, no direct repulse; and though, through her brother's cruel want of all consideration, she was so deeply in his debt, she durst no longer promise its discharge; for the strange departure of Edgar robbed her of all courage to make to him her meditated application.

Yet to leave Sir Sedley in this error was every way terrible. If, which still seemed very possible, from his manner and behaviour, he should check his partiality, and make the whole of what had passed end in mere public-place gallantry, she must always have the mortification to know he had considered her as ready to accept him: If, on the contrary, encouraging what he felt for her, from the belief she returned his best opinion; he should seriously demand her hand—how could she justify the apparent attention she once paid him? and how assert, while so hopelessly his debtor, the independence to reject one who so many ways seemed to hold himself secure?

She was broken in upon by Mrs. Martin, who entered full of lamentation at the intelligence she had just heard from Miss Dannel of her purposed departure, which she ended with, "But as you are going in such haste, my dear, you must have fifty things to do, so pray now, let me help you. Come, what shall I pack up for you? Where's all your things?"

Camilla, incapable of doing any business for herself, accepted the offer.

"Well then, now where's your gown? Bless me! what a beauty's that! why it's been in the dew, and then in the dust, and then in the dew again, till all the bottom must be cut off; why you can never shew it amongst your friends; it will quite bring a disgrace upon poor Tonbridge; come, I think you must give it to me; I've got a piece of muslin just like it, and I can pierce it so that it won't appear; but it will never do for you again."

Camilla was surprised; but her mind was filled with other matters, and the gown was put apart.

"What! are those all your neck handkerchiefs? why, my dear Miss Tyrold, that's a thing you want very bad indeed; why here's one you can never wear again; it wants more darning than its worth."

Camilla

Camilla said she should have very good time to mend it at home.

“But then, my dear, you don’t consider what a bad look that will have amongst your friends; what will they think of poor Tunbridge, that you should have let it go so far? why, may be they’ll never let you come again; the best way will be not to let them see it; suppose I take it off your hands? I dare say they don’t know your count.”

At any other time, Camilla would either have resisted these seizures, or have been diverted by the pretence that they were made only for her own honour; but she was now glad at any rate to get rid of the care of the package.

When this was over, and Mrs. Mittin had pretty well rewarded herself for her trouble: “Well, my dear,” she cried, “and what can I do for you next? Have you paid Mrs. Tildin, and Mr. Doust, and Mr. Tent?”

These were questions that indeed roused Camilla from her reverie; she had not once thought of what she owed to the milliner, to her shoemaker, nor to her haberdasher; from all of whom she had now, through the hands of Mrs. Mittin, had various articles. She thanked her for reminding her of so

necessary an attention, and said she would immediately send for the bills.

"I'll run and pay 'em for you myself," said Mrs. Mittin; "for they always take that kind; and as I recommended them all to you, I have a right they should know how I stand their friend; for there's many an odd service they may do me in return; so I'll go for you with all my heart; only give me the money."

Camilla took out her purse, in which, from her debt to Sir Sedley, and perpetually recurring expences, there now remained but fifteen shillings of her borrowed five guineas. She had repeatedly refused to take any thing more of Mrs. Albery, always hoping every call for money would be the last; but she was too inexperienced to know, That in gay circles, and public places, the demands for wealth are endless and countless; and that economy itself, which is always local, is there lavish and extravagant, compared with its character in private scenes and retired life.

Yet was this the last moment to apply to Mrs. Albery upon such a subject, since it would be endowing her with fresh arms to fight the cause of Sir Sedley. She sat still, and ruminating, till Mrs. Mittin, who without scruple had taken a full inventory
of

Of the contents of the purse, exclaimed :
 “ La ! my dear, why sure I hope that i’s’t
 all you’ve got left ? ”

Camilla was fain to confess she had nothing more at Tunbridge.

“ Well, don’t be uneasy, my dear,” cried she, “ and I’ll go to ’em all, and be caution for you, till you get the money.”

Camilla thanked her very sincerely, and again resumed her first opinion of her real good nature, and kindness of heart. She took her direction in London, whither she was soon to return, and promised, in a short time, to transmit the money for her to distribute, as every one of the shopkeepers went to the metropolis in the winter.

Delighted both with the praise and the commission, Mrs. Mittin took leave ; and Camilla determined to employ her next quarter’s allowance in paying these debts, and frankly to beg from her uncle the five guineas that were due to Mrs. Arlbery.

She then wrote an affectionate adieu to Mrs. Berlinton, intreating to hear from her at Etherington ; and, while she was sealing it, Mrs. Arlbery came to embrace her, as the carriage was at the door.

Camilla, in making her acknowledgments for the kindness she had received, intermingled a petition, that at least, she would

not augment, if she refused to clear, the mistake of Sir Sedley.

"I believe he may safely," she answered, "be left to himself; though it is plain that, at this moment, he is in a difficulty as great as your own; for marriage he still resists, though he finds you resistless. I wish you mutually to be parted till—pardon me, my fair friend—your understandings are mutually cleared, and he is as divested of what is too factitious, as you of what is too artless. Your situation is, indeed, rather whimsical; for the two mortals with whom you have to deal require treatment diametrically opposite; yet, humour them a little adroitly, and you presently gain them both. He that is proud, must be distanced; he that is vain, must be flattered. This is paying them with their own coin; but they hold no other to be current. Pride, if not humbled, degenerates into contempt; vanity, if not indulged, dissolves into indifference."

Camilla disclaimed taking any measures with respect to either; but Mrs. Arlbery insisted the field would be won by Sir Sedley, "who is already," she cried, "persuaded you have for some time encouraged him, and that now you are fully propitious—"

Camilla

Camilla hastily interrupted her: "O, Mrs. Arlbery!" she cried, "I cannot endure this! add not to my disturbance by making it my own work!"

She then embraced her; took leave of the Dannels, and, with the housekeeper of Sir Hugh, set out from Tunbridge for Cleves.

CHAP. VIII.

The right Style of Arguing.

CAMILLA was received with the most tender joy by all her family, again re-assembled at Cleves to welcome the return of young Lynmere, who was expected every hour. Sir Hugh, perfectly recovered from his late illness, and busy, notwithstanding all remonstrance, in preparation for the approaching nuptials, was in spirits that exhilarated whoever saw him. Eugenia awaited that event with gentle, though varying sensations, from fears, lest her personal misfortunes should prove repulsive to Clermont, and from wishes to find him resembling Melmond in talents, and Bellamy in passion and constancy.

Dr. Orkborne now gave his lessons with redoubled assiduity, from an ambition to produce to the scholastic traveller, a phenomenon of his own workmanship in a learned young female, nor were his toils less ready or less pleasant, from a secret surmise that they would shortly end. But Miss Margland fretted, that this wedding would

would advance no London journey ; and Indiana could not for a moment recover from her indignation, that the deformed and ugly Eugenia, though two years younger than herself, should be married before her. Lavinia had no thought but for the happiness of her sister ; and Mr. Tyrold lamented the absence of his wife, who, alike from understanding and affection, was the only person to properly superintend this affair, but from whom Dr. Marchmont, just arrived, brought very faint hopes of a speedy return.

Eugenia, however, was not the sole care of her father, at this period. The countenance of Camilla soon betrayed, to his inquiring eyes, the inefficacy of the Tunbridge journey. But he forbore all question ; and left to time or her choice to unravel, if new incidents kept alive her inquietude, or if no incident at all had been equally prejudicial to her repose.

* * * *

Two days after, while Camilla, still astonished she neither saw nor heard from Edgar, was sitting with her sisters, and recounting to them her late adventures, and present difficulties, with Sir Sedley Clarendel, Jacob brought her, in its own superb
bird-

bird-cage, the learned little bullfinch ; telling her, it had been delivered to him without any message, by a man who said she had left it, by mistake, at Tunbridge, whence he had had orders to follow her with it to Cley's park.

She was much provoked thus to receive it. Mrs. Arlbery had pressed her to take it in her uncle's chaise, which she had firmly refused ; and she now concluded this method was adopted, that Sir Sedley might imagine she detained it as his gift.

In drawing-out, soon after, the receptacle for the bird's nourishment, she perceived, written with a pencil upon the wood, these words : " Thou art gone then, fair fugitive ! Ah ! at least, fly only where thou mayst be pursued ! " She recollected the hand of Sir Sedley, and in being now sure it was sent by himself, could no longer doubt that his intentions were serious.

In extreme perplexity she consulted with her sisters ; but, when candidly she had related, that once, to her never-ending regret, she had apparently welcomed his attentions, Eugenia pronounced her rectitude to be engaged by that error, as strongly as her gratitude by the preservation of her life, and the extraordinary service done to Lionel, not to reject the young Baronet, should he make his proposals.

She

She heard this opinion with horror. Timid shame, and the counsel of her father, united to impede her naming the internal obstacle which she felt to be insurmountable; and, while casting up, in silence, her appealing eyes to Heaven, for relief from the intricacy in which she found herself involved, she saw Lionel galloping into the park.

She flew to meet him, and he dismounted, and led his horse, to walk with her.

She flattered herself she might now represent the mischief he was doing, and obtain from him some redress. But he was more wild and intractable than ever.

"Well, my dear girl," he cried, "when are all these betterings and worshings to take place? Numps has sent for me to see poor little Greek and Latin hobble to the altar; but, 'tis a million to one, if our noble Baronet does not whisk you there before her. He's a charming fellow, faith. I had a good long confab with him this morning."

"This morning? I hope, then, you were so good, so just, as to tell him when you mean to pay the money you have borrowed?"

"My dear child, I often think you were born but yesterday, only, by some accident, you came into the world, like Minerva, grown up and ready dressed. What makes
you

you think I mean to pay him? Have I given him any bond?"

"A bond? Is that necessary to justice and honour?"

"If I had asked the money, you are right, my dear; I ought then, certainly, to refund. But, as it now stands, 'tis his own affair. I have nothing to do with it: except, indeed, receiving the dear little golden boys, and making merry with them."

"O fie, Lionel, fie!"

"Why, what had I to do with it? Do you think he would care one fig if he saw me sunk to the bottom of the Red Sea? No, my dear, no; you are the little debtor; so balance your accounts for yourself, and don't cast them upon your poor neighbours, who have full enough to settle of their own."

Camilla was thunderstruck: "And have you been so cruel," she cried, "seeing the matter in such a light, to place me in such a predicament?"

"Cruel, my dear girl? why, what will it cost you, except a dimple or two the more? And don't you know, you always look best when you smile? I assure you, it's a mercy he don't see you when you are giving me one of my lectures. It disfigures
you

you so horribly, that he'd take fright and never speak to you again."

"What can I ever say, to make you attend to me, or feel for me? Tell me, at least, what has passed this morning; and assure me that nothing new, nothing yet worse, has occurred."

"O no, nothing at all. All is in the fairest train possible. I dare say he'll come hither, upon the grand question, before sun-set."

Camilla gasped for breath, and was some time before she could ask whence he drew such a conclusion.

"O, because I see he's in for it. I have a pretty good eye, my dear! He said, too, he had such a prodigious——friendship, I think he called it, for you; that he was immeasurably happy, and all that, to be of the least service to your brother. A fine fellow, upon my word! a fine generous spark as ever I saw! He charged me to call upon him freely when I had any little embarrassment, or difficulty; or was hard run, or things of that sort. He's a fine buck, I tell you, and knows the world perfectly; that I promise you. He's none of your drivellers, none of your ignoramuses. He has the true notion of things. He's just a right friend for me. You could not have made a better match."

Camilla,

Camilla, in the most solemn manner, protested herself disengaged in thought, word, and deed; and declared her fixed intention so to continue. But he only laughed at her declarations, calling them maidenly fibs; and assuring her the young Baronet was so much in earnest, she might as well be sincere as not. "Besides," he added, "'tis not fair to trifle where a man behaves so handsomely and honourably. Consider the £. 200!"

"I shall quite lose my senses, Lionel!" cried she, in an agony; "I shall quite lose my senses if you speak in this manner!"

Lionel shouted aloud; "Why, my dear girl, what is £. 200 to Sir Sedley Clarendel? You talk as if he had twenty pound a-year for pin-money, like you and Lavinia, that might go with half a gown a-year, if good old Numps did not help you. Why, he's as rich as Croætus, child. Besides, he would have been quite affronted if I had talked of paying him such a trifle, for he offered me any thing I pleased. O, he knows the world, I promise you! He's none of your starched prigs. He knows life, my dear! He said, he could perfectly conceive how hard it must be to a lad of spirit, like me, to be always exact. I don't know that I ever made a more agreeable acquaintance in my life."

Camilla

Camilla was in an agitation that made him regard her, for a moment, with a serious surprise; but his natural levity soon resumed its post, and, laughing at himself for being nearly, he said, taken in, by her childish freaks, 'he protested he would bite no more: "For, after all, you must not think to make a fool of me, my dear. It won't do. I'm too knowing. Do you suppose, if he had not already made up his mind to the noose, and was not sure you had made up yours to letting it be tied, he would have cared for poor me, and my scrapes? No, no; whatever he does for me, before you are married, you may set down in your own memorandum book: whatever he may please to do afterwards, I am content should be charged to poor Pillgarlic."

He then bid her good-morrow, by the name of Lady Clarendel; and said, he would go and see if little Greek and Latin were as preposterous a pride about young Lynmere.

Camilla remained almost petrified with amazement at her own situation; and only was deterred from immediately opening her whole heart and affairs to her father, with the confidence to which his indulgence entitled him, by the impossibility of explaining her full distress without betraying her brother.

CHAP. IX.

A Council.

THE next morning, Camilla, eager to try once more her influence with her brother, accompanied him into the park, and renewed her remonstrances; but with no better success; and while they were passing by a private gate, that opened to the high road, they saw Sir Sedley Clarendel driving by in his phaeton.

Lionel, bursting from his sister, opened the gate, called to Sir Sedley to give his reins to one of his servants, and brought him, not unwilling, though much surprised, into the park.

Camilla, in dismay unspeakable at this conduct, and the idea of such a meeting, had run forward instantly to hide herself in the summer-house, to avoid re-passing the gate in her way to the mansion; but her scheme was more precipitate than wise; Lionel caught a glimpse of her gown as she went into the little building, and shouted aloud: "Look! look! Sir Sedley! there's
Camilla

Camilla making believe to run away from you!"

"Ah, fair fugitive!" cried the Baronet, springing forward, and entering the summer-house almost as soon as herself, "fly only thus, whither you may be pursued!"

Camilla, utterly confounded, knew not where to cast her eyes, where to hide her face; and her quick-changing colour, and short-heaved breath, manifested an excess of confusion, that touched, flattered, and penetrated the Baronet so deeply and so suddenly, as to put him off from all guard of consequences, and all recollection of matrimonial distaste: "Beautiful, resistless Camilla!" he cried; "how vain is it to struggle against your witchery! Assure me but of your clemency; and I will adore the chains that shackle me!"

Camilla, wholly overcome, by gratitude, repentance, and shame, sunk upon a chair, and shed a torrent of tears that she even sought not to restrain. The shock of refusing one, to whose error in believing himself acceptable she had largely contributed, or the horror of yielding to him her hand, while her heart was in the possession of another, made her almost wish, at this moment, he should divine her distress, that his own pride might conclude it.

But

But far different from what would produce such an effect, were the feelings of pride now working in his bosom. He imagined her emotion had its source in causes the softest and most flattering. Every personal obstacle sunk before this idea, and with a seriousness in his manner he had not yet used: "This evening, lovely Camilla," he cried, "let me beg, for this evening, the audience accorded me upon that which I lost at Tunbridge."

Camilla then, hastily rising, cried, "Sir Sedley, I beseech—" when Lionel capering into the little apartment, danced round it in mad ecstasy, chanting "Lady Clarendel, Lady Clarendel, my dear Lady Clarendel!"

Camilla now was not confused alone. Sir Sedley himself could gladly have thrust him out of the building; but neither the looks of surprise and provocation of the Baronet, nor the prayers nor reprimands of Camilla, could tame his wild transport. He shook hands, whether he would or not, with the one; he bowed most obsequiously, whether she would regard him or not, to the other; and still chanting the same burden, made a clamour that shook the little edifice to its foundation.

The strong taste for ridicule, that was a prominent part of the character of Sir Sed-

ley, was soon conquered by this ludicrous behaviour, and both his amazement and displeasure ended in a hearty fit of laughter. But Camilla suffered too severely to join in the mirth; she blushed for her brother, she blushed for herself, she hung her head in speechless shame, and covered her eyes with her hand.

The noisy merriment of Lionel prevented any explanation, yet rendered it every moment more necessary. Sir Sedley, however, repeating his request for the evening, took leave.

Camilla looked upon his departing in this manner as her sentence to misery, and was pursuing him, to decline the purposed visit; but Lionel, seizing her two hands, swung her round the room, in defiance of her even angry expostulations and sufferings, which he neither credited nor conceived, and then skipt after the Baronet himself, who was already out of the park.

She became now nearly frantic. She thought herself irretrievably in the power of Sir Sedley, and by means so forced and indelicate, that she was scarcely more afflicted at the event, than shocked by its circumstances; and though incapable to really harbour rancour against a brother she sincerely loved, she yet believed at this moment

ment she never should forgive, nor willingly see him more.

In this state she was found by Lavinia. The history was inarticulately told, but Lavinia could give only her pity; she saw not any avenue to an honourable retreat, and thought, like Eugenia, she could now only free herself by the breach of what should be dearer to her even than happiness, her probity and honour.

Utterly inconsolable she remained, till again she heard the voice of Lionel, loudly singing in the park.

"Go to him! go to him! my dearest Lavinia," she cried, "and, if my peace is dear to you, prevail with him to clear up the mistakes of Sir Sedley, and to prevent his dreaded, killing visit this evening!"

Lavinia only answered by compliance; but, after an half hour's useless contest with her riotous brother, returned to her weeping sister, not merely unsuccessful with regard to her petition, but loaded with fresh ill tidings that she knew not how to impart. Lionel had only laughed at the repugnance of Camilla, which he regarded as something between childishness and affectation, and begged Lavinia to be wiser than to heed to it: "Brother Sedley has desired me, however," he added, "not to speak of the matter

matter to Numps nor my father, till he has had a little more conversation with his chamber; and he intends to call to-night as if upon a visit to me."

When Camilla learnt, at length, this painful end of her embassy, she gave herself up so completely to despair, that Lavinia, affrighted, ran to the house for Eugenia, whose extreme youth was no impediment, in the minds of her liberal sisters, to their belief nor reverence of her superior wisdom. Her species of education had early prepossessed them with respect for her knowledge, and her unaffected fondness for study, had fixed their opinion of her extraordinary understanding. The goodness of her heart, the evenness of her temper, and her natural turn to contemplation, had established her character alike for sanctity and for philosophy throughout the family.

She listened with commiseration to the present state of the case: "Certainly," she cried, "you cannot, in honour, now refuse him; but deal with him sincerely, and he may generously himself relinquish his claims. Write to him, my dear Camilla; tell him you grieve to afflict, yet disdain to deceive him; assure him of your perfect esteem and eternal gratitude; but entreat him nobly to restore to you the liberty of which your

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obligations, without his consent, must rob you."

To Lavinia this advice appeared infallible; but Camilla, though she felt an entanglement which fettered herself, thought it by no means sufficiently direct or clear to authorise a rejection of Sir Sedley; since, strangely as she seemed in his power, circumstances had placed her there, and not his own solicitation.

Yet to prevent a visit of which her knowledge seemed consent, and which her consent must seem seriously to authorise, she deemed as indispensable to her character, as to her fears. She hesitated, therefore, not a moment in preferring writing to a meeting; and after various conversations, and various essays, the following billet was dispatched to Clarendel Place, through the means of Molly Mill, and by her friend Tommy Hodd.

To Sir Sedley Clarendel.

I SHOULD ill return what I owe to Sir Sedley Clarendel by causing him any useless trouble I can spare him. He spoke of a visit hither this evening, when I was too much hurried to represent that it could not be received, as my brother's residence is at
Ether-

Etherington, and my father and my uncle have not the honour to be known to Sir Sedley. For me, my gratitude must ever be unalterable; and where accident occasions a meeting, I shall be most happy to express it; but I have nothing to say, nothing to offer, that could recompense one moment of Sir Sedley's time given voluntarily to such a visit.

CAMILLA TYROLD.

Ill as this letter satisfied her, she could devise nothing better; but though her sisters both thought it too rigorous, she would not risk anything gentler.

During the dinner, they all appeared absent and dejected; but Sir Hugh attributed it to the non-arrival of Clermont, in watching for whom his own time was completely occupied, by examining two weather-cocks, and walking from one to the other, to see if they agreed, or how they changed. Indiana was wholly engrossed in consultations with Miss Margland, upon the most becoming dress for a bride's maid; and Mr. Tyrold, having observed that his three girls had spent the morning together, concluded Camilla had divulged to them her unhappy perplexity, and felt soothed himself in considering she had soothers so affectionate and faithful.

Early in the evening Tommy Hodd arrived, and Molly Mill brought Camilla the following answer of Sir Sedley.

Miss Camilla Tyfold.

Ah! what in this lower sphere can be unchequered, when even a correspondence with the most lovely of her sex, brings alarm with its felicity? Must I come, then, to Cleves, fair Infensible, but as a visitor to Mr. Lionel? Have you taken a captive only to see him in fetters? Allured a victim merely to behold him bleed? Ah! tomorrow, at least, permit the audience that to-day is denied, and at your feet let your slave receive his doom.

SEDLEY CLARENDEL.

Camilla turned cold. She shrunk from a remonstrance she conceived she had merited, and regarded herself to be henceforth either culpable or unhappy. Unacquainted with the feminine indulgence which the world, by long prescription, has granted to coquetry, its name was scarcely known to her; and she saw in its own native selfishness the ungenerous desire to please, where she herself was indifferent; and anticipated from Sir Sedley reproach, if not contempt.

No

No sophistications of custom had warped the first innocence of her innate sense of right, and to trifle with the feelings of another for any gratification of her own, made success bring a blush to her integrity, not exultation to her vanity.

The words *victim* and *bleeding*, much affected the tender Lavinia, while those of *fetters*, *captive*, and *insensible*, satisfied the heroic Eugenia that Sir Sedley deserved the hand of her sister; but neither of them spoke.

"You say nothing?" cried Camilla, turning paler and paler, and sitting down lest she should fall.

They both wept and embraced her, and Eugenia said, if, indeed, she could not conquer her aversion, she could point out no way to elude the Baronet, but by an open confession of repugnance, in the conversation he demanded.

Camilla saw not less strongly the necessity of being prompt and explicit; but how receive Sir Sedley at Cleves? and upon what pretence converse with him privately? Even Lionel the next day was forced to return to the university, though his presence, if he staid, would, in all probability, but add to every difficulty.

At length, they decided, that the conference should take place at the Grove; and

to prevent the threatened visit, Camilla wrote the following answer :

To Sir Sedley Clarendel.

I SHOULD be grieved, indeed, to return my obligations to Sir Sedley Clarendel by meriting his serious reproach ; yet I cannot have the honour of seeing him at Cleves, since my brother is immediately quitting it for Oxford. As soon as I hear Mrs. Arlbery is again at the Grove, I shall wait upon her, and always be most happy to assure Sir Sedley of my gratitude, which will be as lasting as it is sincere.

CAMILLA TYROLD.

Though wretched in this strange state of things, she knew not how to word her letter more positively, since his own, notwithstanding its inferences, had rather the style of florid gallantry than of decided and serious regard. Molly Mill undertook that Tommy Hodd should carry it early the next morning.

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Lionel was enraged at the non-appearance of the young Baronet at night, which
he

he attributed to the coldness of Camilla; telling her she would lose the best match in the whole county, from her foolish trimmings, and silly ignorance of life.

CHAP. X.

A Proposal of Marriage.

THE increasing depression of Camilla, and the melancholy of her sympathising sisters, though still attributed to the adverse wind by the compass-watching Baronet, escaped not the notice of Mr. Tyrold; who, alarmed for the peace of his daughter, determined to watch for the first quiet opportunity of investigating her actual situation.

Lionel, after breakfast, the next morning, was obliged to relinquish waiting for Clermont, and to set off for Oxford. He contrived to whisper to Camilla, that he hoped she would be a good girl at last, and not play the fool; but, finding she only sighed, he laughed at her calamitous state, in becoming mistress of fifteen thousand per annum, only by the small trouble of running over a short ceremony; and, assuring her he would assist her off with part of the charge, if it were too heavy for her, bid her inform him in time of the propitious day.

Camilla,

Camilla, soon after, saw from her window, riding across the park to the house, Major Cerwood. She suspected her tormenting brother to have been again at work; not was she mistaken. He had met with the Major at the hotel at Tunbridge, while his spirits, always violent, were in a state of almost intoxication of delight at the first idea of such an accession to his powers of amusement, as a new brother rolling in immense wealth, which he already considered as nearly as his own. The High wrought, therefore, for what he deemed good sport, he confirmed what he had asserted to the Major at the bar at Northwick, of the expectations of Camilla from Sir Hugh, by relating the public fact, of her having been announced to the family and neighbourhood, for his uncle's heiress, at ten years of age, and only sinking, in his account, the revocation made so soon after in favour of Eugenia. To this, he added his advice, that no measure should be lost, as numerous new suitors were likely to pursue her from Tunbridge.

The Major, upon alighting, inquired for Sir Hugh, deeming Mr. Tyrold of little consequence; since it was not from him Camilla was to inherit her fortune.

The Baronet, as usual, was watching the winds and the clouds; but, concluding whe-

ever came would bring some news from Clermont, received the Major with the utmost cordiality, saying: "I see, sir, you are a stranger; by which I suppose you to be just come from abroad; where, I hope, you left all well."

"I am just come, sir," answered the Major, "from Tunbridge, where I had the honour, through my acquaintance with Mrs. Arbery, of meeting daily with your charming niece, an honour, sir, which must cause all the future happiness or misery of my life."

He then made a declaration, in form, of the most ardent passion for Camilla; mentioned his family, which was an honourable one; talked of his expectations with confidence, though vaguely; and desired to leave the disposition of the settlement wholly to the Baronet, who, he hoped, would not refuse to see his elder brother, a gentleman of fortune in Lincolnshire, who would have the honour to wait upon him, at any time he would be so good as to appoint, upon this momentous affair.

Sir Hugh heard this harangue with confirmation. The Major was in the prime of life, his person was good, his speech was florid, his air was assured, and his regiments were gay. Not a doubt of his success occurred to the Baronet; who saw, in one blow,

blow, the darling scheme of his old age demolished, in the deprivation of Camilla.

The Major impatiently waited for an answer; but Sir Hugh was too much disordered to frame one; he walked up and down the room, muttering, in a desponding manner, to himself, "Lord, help us! what a set of poor weak mortals we are, we poor men! The best schemes and plans in the world always coming to nothing before we can bring them about! I'll never form another while I live, for the sake of this one warning. Nobody knows, next, but what Clermont will be carrying off Eugenia to see foreign parts! and then comes some other of these red-coats to take away Indiana; and, after doing all for the best so long, I may be left all alone, except just for Mrs. Margland and the Doctor! that I don't take much pleasure in, Lord, help me! except as a Christian, which I hope is no sin."

At length, endeavouring to compose himself, he sat down, and said, "So, you are come, sir, to take away from me my own particular little niece? which is a hard thing upon an uncle, intending her to live with him. However, I don't mean to find fault; but I can tell you this one thing, sir, which I beg you to remember, which is, if you don't make her happy, you'll break my

heart ! For she's what I love the best in the world, little as I've made it appear, by not leaving her a shilling. For which sake, however, I can't but respect you the more for coming after her, instead of Eugenia."

"Sir?" cried the Major, amazed.

"The other two chaps," continued he, "that came about us not long ago, wanted to make their court to Eugenia and Indiana; as well as another that came to the house when I was ill, in the same coat as yourself, by what I can gather from the description; but never a one has come to Camilla yet, except yourself, because my brother can spare her but a trifle, having another young girl to provide for, besides Lionel; which is the most expensive of them all, poor boy! never having enough, by the reason Oxford is so dear, as he tells me."

The Major now wore an air of surprise and uneasiness that Sir Hugh began to observe, but attributed to his unpleasant reception of his proposals. He begged his pardon, therefore, and again assured him of his respect for a choice so little mercenary, which he looked upon as a mark of a good heart.

The Major, completely staggered, and suspecting the information of Lionel to be ill-grounded, if not purposely deluding, entertained

treated his permission to wait upon him again; and offered for the present to take leave.

Sir Hugh, in a melancholy voice, said, he would first summon his niece, as he could not answer it to his conscience preventing the meeting, unless she gave him leave.

He then rang the bell, and told Jacob to call Camilla.

Major Cerwood was excessively distressed. To retreat seemed impossible; yet to connect himself without fortune, when he thought he was addressing a rich heiress, was a turn of fate he scarcely knew how either to support or to parry. All that, in this haste, he could resolve, was, to let the matter pass for the moment, and then insist upon satisfaction from Lionel, either in clearing up the mistake, or taking upon himself its blame.

When Camilla appeared, the disturbance of Sir Hugh still augmented; and he could hardly articulate, "My dear, in the case you are willing to leave your family, here's a gentleman come to make his addresses to you; which I think it right you should know, though how I shall struggle through it, if I lose you, is more than my poor weak head can tell; for what shall I do without my dear little girl, that I thought to make the

the best comfort of my old age? which, however, I beg you not to think of, in case this young Captain's more agreeable."

"Ah! my dear uncle!" cried she, "your Camilla can never return half the comfort she receives from you! keep me with you still, and ever! I am much obliged to Major Cerwood. I beg him to accept my sincerest thanks; but to pardon me, when I assure him, they are all I have to offer him."

Repulse was not new to the Major; who, in various country towns, had sought to retrieve his affairs by some prudent connection; his pride, however, had never so little suffered as on the present occasion, for his apprehension of error or imposition had removed from him all thought of even the possibility of a refusal; which, now, therefore, unexpectedly and joyfully obviated his embarrassment, and enabled him to quit the field by an honourable retreat. He bowed profoundly, called himself, without knowing what he said, the most unhappy of men; and, without risking one solicitation, or a moment for repentance, hastily took leave, with intention, immediately, to demand an explanation of Lionel.

But he had not escaped a mile from the house, ere he gave up that design, from anticipating the ridicule that might follow it.

it. To require satisfaction for a young lady's want of fortune, however reasonable, would always be derided as ludicrous. He resolved, therefore, quietly to put up with the rejection; and to gather his next documents concerning the portion of a fair damsel, from authority better to be relied upon than that of a brother.

Sir Hugh, for some time, discovered not that he had retired. Enchanted by so unexpected a dismissal, his favourite scheme of life seemed accorded to him, and he pressed Camilla to his bosom, in a transport of joy. "We shall live together, now, I hope," he cried, "without any of these young chaps coming in again to part us. Not that I would object to your marrying, my dear girl, if it was with a relation, like Eugenia, or, with a neighbour, like Indiana, if it had not been for its going off; but to see you taken away from me by a mere stranger, coming from distant parts, and knowing nothing of any of us, is a thing that makes my heart ache but to think of; so I hope it will happen no more; for these trials do no good to my recovery."

Turning round, then, with a view to say something consolatory to the Major, he was seriously concerned to find him departed. "I can't say," he cried, "I had any intention to send him off so short, his mean-

ing

ing not being bad, considering him in the light of a person in love; which is a time when a man has not much thought, except for himself, by what I can gather."

He then proposed a walk, to look out if Clermont were coming. The wind, he acknowledged, was contrary; but, he did not doubt, upon such a particular occasion, his good lad would not mind such difficulties.

CHAP. XI.

*A Bull-Dog.*

SIR HUGH called upon his other nieces to join him; purposing to stroll to the end of a lane which led to the London road.

Camilla accompanied the party in mournful silence; ruminating upon the assuming letter she had received, the interview she should have to sustain, and her apparent dependance upon Sir Sedley.

When they came to the high road, Sir Hugh made a stop, and bid every body look sharp.

A horseman was seen advancing full gallop. By his figure he appeared to be young; by his pace, in uncommon speed.

"That's him," cried Sir Hugh, striking his stick upon the ground, and smiling most complacently; "I said he would not mind the wind, my dear Eugenia! what's the wind, or the waves either, to a lover? which is a thing, however, that I won't talk about;

about ; so don't be ashamed, my dear girl, nobody knowing what we mean."

Eugenia looked down, deeply colouring, and much regretting the lameness that prevented her running back, to avoid so public and discountenancing a meeting.

The horseman now came up to them, and was preparing to turn down the lane ; when, all at once, they perceived him to be Edgar Mandlebert.

He had left Tunbridge in a manner not more abrupt than comfortless. His disappointment in the failure of Camilla at the rooms had been as bitter, as his expectations from the promised conference had been animated. When Lionel appeared, he inquired if his sister were absent from illness.—No ; she was only writing a letter. To take this moment for such a purpose, be the letter what it might, seemed sporting with his curiosity and warm interest in her affairs : and he went back, mortified and dejected, to his lodgings ; where, just arrived by the stage, he found a letter from Dr. Marchmont, acquainting him with his return to his rectory. In this suspensive state of mind, to cast himself upon his sagacious friend seemed a relief the most desirable : but, while considering whether first to claim from Camilla her promised communication, the voice of Lionel, issuing from

from the room of Major Cerwood, struck his ears. He darted forth, and in accompanying the youth to his horse, received information, under the pretence of great secrecy, that Major Cerwood was going immediately to ask leave of absence, in order to proceed to Hampshire, with final proposals of marriage with Camilla. He now concluded this was the subject upon which she had meant to consult with him; but delicacy, pride, and hope all combated his interference. He determined even to avoid her, till the answer should be given. "I must owe her hand," cried he, "to her heart, not to a contest such as this; and, if impartially and unbiassed, the Major is refused, no farther cruel doubt; no torturing hesitation, shall keep me another minute from her feet!" With the dawn, therefore, he set out for Hampshire, fixed not to venture to Cleves till this affair should be determined: and now, a mile or two from the park, having met the Major himself, he imagined the acceptance, or the rejection decided. They merely touched their hats as they passed each other; and he instantly took the route which the Major was quitting.

In the excess of his tribulation, he was passing the whole group, without discerning one of its figures; when Sir Hugh called out,

out, "Why it's young Mr. Edgar! So now we've walked all this way for nothing! and Clermont may be still at Jericho, or at Rome, for any thing we know to the contrary!"

Edgar stooped short. He felt himself shiver at sight of Camilla, but dismounted, gave his horse to his groom, and joined the party.

Eugenia recovering, now fearlessly looked up; but Camilla, struck and affected, shook in every limb, and was forced to hold by Lavinia.

Edgar called upon his utmost presence of mind to carry him through what he conceived to be a final trial. He spoke to Sir Hugh, and compelled himself to speak separately to every one else; but, when he addressed Camilla, to whom he said something not very distinctly, about Turnbridge, she curtsied to him slightly, and turned away, without making any answer. Her mind, taking suddenly a quick retrospection of all that had passed between them, presented him to her view as uncertain and delusive; and, casting upon him, internally, the whole odium of her present distress, her feelings were so indignant, that, in her present desperate state, she deemed it beneath her to disguise them, either from himself or the world.

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Edgar,

Edgar, to whose troubled imagination every thing painted his rival, concluded the Major had been heard with favour; and that his own adverse counsel was now recollected with resentment.

Sir Hugh, far more fatigued, by his disappointment than by his walk, said he should go no further, as he found it in vain to expect Clermont; and accepted the arm of Edgar to aid his stick in helping him home.

Camilla, still leaning upon Lavinia, mounted a little bank, which she knew Sir Hugh could not ascend, that she might walk on where Edgar could not join her: involuntarily ejaculating, "Lavinia! if you would avoid deceit and treachery, look at a man as at a picture, which tells you only the present moment! Rely upon nothing of time to come! They are not like us, Lavinia; they think themselves free, if they have made no verbal profession; though they may have pledged themselves by looks, by actions, by attentions and by manners, a thousand, and a thousand times!"

Sir Hugh meanwhile, though wholly unheard, related copiously, in a low voice, to Edgar, the history of his preparations for Clermont; begging him, however, to take no notice of them to Eugenia: and, then, adding, "Very likely Mr. Edgar, you are
just

just come from Tunbridge? and, if so, you may have met with that young Captain that has been with us this morning, who I understand to be a Major?"

Edgar was thrown into the utmost trepidation; the artless openness of Sir Hugh gave him every reason to suppose he should immediately gather full intelligence, and all his peace and all his hopes might hang upon another word. He could only bow to the question; but before Sir Hugh could go on, a butcher's boy, who was riding by, from a wanton love of mischief, gave a signal to his attending bull-dog, to attack the old spaniel that accompanied Sir Hugh.

Sustained by his master many a year, the proud old favourite, though unequal to the combat, disdained to fly; and the fierce bull-dog would presently have demolished him; had not Edgar, recovering all his vigour from his earnest desire to rescue an animal so dear to Sir Hugh, armed himself with the baronet's stick, and thrust it dexterously across the jaws of his intended antagonist.

Nothing, however, could withstand the fangs of the bull-dog; they soon severed it, and, again, he made at the spaniel; but Edgar rushed between them, with no other weapons than the broken fragments of the stick: and, while the baronet and Eugenia

screamed out to old Rover to return to them, and Lavinia, with more readiness of common sense, exerted the fullest powers of which her gentle voice was capable, to conjure the wicked boy to call off his dog, Camilla, who was the last to look round at this scene, only turned about as the incensed and disappointed bull-dog, missing his object, aimed at Edgar himself. Roused at once from her sullen calm to the most agonising sensibility, every thing and every body, herself most of all, were forgotten in the sight of his danger; and, with a piercing shriek, she darted down the bank, and arrived at the tremendous spot, at the same instant that the more useful exhortations of Lavinia had induced the boy to withdraw the fierce animal; who, with all his might, and all his fury, obeyed the weak whistle of a little urchin he had been bred to love and respect, for bringing him his daily food.

Camilla perceived not if the danger were impending, or over; gasping, pale, and agitated, she caught Mandlebert by the arm, and, in broken accents, half pronounced, "O Edgar!—are you hurt?"

The revulsion that had operated in her mind took now its ample turn in that of Mandlebert; he could hardly trust his senses, hardly believe he existed; yet he felt the
pressure

pressure of her hand upon his arm, and saw in her countenance terror the most undisguised, and tenderness that went straight to his soul. "Is it Camilla," he cried, "who thus speaks to me?—Is not my safety or my destruction alike indifferent to Camilla?"

"O no! O no!" cried she, scarcely conscious she answered at all, till called to recollection by his own changed looks; changed from incredulity and amazement to animation that lightened up every feature, to eyes that shot fire. Abashed, astonished, ashamed, she precipitately drew away her hand, and sought quietly to retire.

But Edgar was no longer master of himself; he conceived he was on a pinnacle; whence he could only, and without any gradation, turn to happiness or despair. He followed her, trembling and uncertain, his joy fading into alarm at her retreat, his hope transforming into apprehension at her resumed coldness of demeanor. "Do you repent," he cried, "that you have shown me a little humanity?—will the Major—the happy Major!—be offended you do less than desert me?"

"The Major!" repeated she, looking back, surprised, "can you think the Major has any influence with me?"

"Ah,

" Ah, Heaven ! " he cried, " what do you say ! " —

Enchanted, affrighted, bewildered, yet silent, she hurried on ; Edgar could not forget himself more than a moment ; he forbore, therefore, to follow her thus publicly, and, though with a self-denial next to torture, returned to Sir Hugh, to whom his arm was doubly necessary, from the scene he had just witnessed, and the loss of his stick.

The butcher's boy and his bull-dog were decamped ; and the Baronet and Eugenia were rivalling each other in fondling the rescued spaniel, and in pouring thanks and praise unlimited upon Edgar.

They then walked back as before ; and, as soon as they re-entered the mansion, the female party went up stairs, and Sir Hugh, warmly shaking Edgar by the hand, said : " My dear Mr. Edgar, this is one of the happiest days of my life, except just that of my nephew's coming over, which it is but right to put before it. But here, first, my dear Camilla's refused that young Captain, who would have carried her the Lord knows where, as I make no doubt ; and next, I've saved the life of my poor old Rover, by the means of your good-nature."

" Refused ? " cried Edgar ; " my dear Sir Hugh ! — did you say refused ? "

Sir Hugh innocently gratified him with the repetition of the word, but begged him not to mention it, "For fear," he said, "it should hurt the young man when he falls in love somewhere else; which I heartily hope he will do soon, poor gentleman! for the sake of its not fretting him."

"Miss Camilla, then, has refused him?" again repeated Edgar, with a countenance that, to any man but the Baronet, must have betrayed his whole soul.

"Yes, poor gentleman! this very morning; for which I am thankful enough: for what do we know of those young officers, who may all be sent to the East Indies, or Jamaica, every day of their lives? Not but what I have the proper pity for him, which, I hope, is all that can be expected."

Edgar walked about the room, in a perturbation of hope, fear, and joy, that disabled him from all further appearance of attention; but that fixed his resolution to stay at Cleves till he could meet with Camilla alone.

Camilla uttered not a word after the adventure of the bull-dog. The smallest idea that she could excite the least emotion in Edgar, brought a secret rapture to her heart, that, at any former period, would have sufficed to render her happy: but, at this instant of entanglement with another, she

she revolted from the indulgence of such pleasure; and instead of dwelling on the look, the accent, the manner, that were susceptible, by any construction, of partiality, she checked every idea that did not represent him as unstable and inconsistent.

Yet this entanglement, in which, scarcely knowing how, she now seemed to be entwined with Sir Sedley, grew more and more terrific; and when she considered that her sisters themselves thought her independence gone, and her honour engaged, she was seized with so much astonishment at her own situation, that her understanding seemed to play her false, and she believed the whole a dream.

CHAP. XII.

An Oak Tree.

WHEN the sisters were summoned down stairs to dinner, planted at the door, ready to receive them at their entrance, stood Edgar. Lavinia and Eugenia addressed him as usual; but Camilla could not speak, could not return his salutation, could not look at him. She sat hastily down in her accustomed place by her uncle, and even the presence of her father scarcely restrained her tears, as she contrasted the hopeless uncertainties of Edgar, with the perilous pursuit of Sir Sedley.

Edgar, for the first time, saw her avoidance without suspecting that it flowed from repugnance. The interest she had shewn for his safety was still bounding in his breast; and as, from time to time, he stole a glance at her, and observed her emotion, his heart whispered him the softest hopes, that soon the most perfect confidence would make every feeling reciprocal.

But these hopes were not long without alloy; he soon discerned something that far

exceeded what could give him pleasure in her perturbation ; he read in it not merely hurry and alarm, but suffering and distress.

He now ventured to look at her no more ; his confidence gave place to pity ; he saw she was unhappy, and breathed no present wish but to relieve and console her.

When the dessert was served, she was preparing to retire ; but she caught the eye of her father, and saw she should not long be alone ; she re-seated herself, therefore, in haste, to postpone, at least, his scrutiny.

Every body, at length, arose, and Sir Hugh proposed that they should all walk in the park, during his nap, but keep close to the pales, that they might listen for all passengers, in case of Clermont's coming.

To this, also, Camilla could make no objection, and they set out. She took an arm of each sister, and indulged the heaviness of her heart in not uttering a word.

They had not gone far, when a servant ran after Mr. Tyrold with a packet, just arrived, by a private hand, from Lisbon. He returned to read it in his own room ; Lavinia and Eugenia accompanied him to hear its contents, and Camilla, for the first time, seemed the least affectionate of his daughters ; she durst not encounter him but in the mixt company of all the house ; she

told Lavinia to make haste back with the news, and took the arm of Indiana.

The compulsion of uninteresting discourse soon became intolerable; and no longer chained to the party by the awe of her father, she presently left Indiana to Miss Margland, and perceiving that Edgar was conversing with Dr. Orkborne, said she would wait for her sisters; and, turning a little aside, sat down upon a bench under a large oak.

Here her painful struggle and unwilling forbearance ended; she gave free vent to her tears, and thought herself the most wretched of human beings; she found her heart, her aching heart, more than ever devoted to Mandlebert, filled with his image, revering his virtues, honouring even his coldness from a persuasion she deserved not his affection, and sighing solely for the privilege to consign herself to the remembrance of him for life, though unknown to himself, and unsuspected by the world.

The very idea of Sir Sedley was horror to her; she felt guilty to have involved herself in an intercourse so fertile of danger; she thought over, with severest repentance, her short, but unjustifiable deviation from that transparent openness of conduct, which her disposition as much as her education ought to have rendered unchangeable. To

that,

that, alone, was owing all her actual difficulty, for to that alone was owing her own opinion of any claim upon her justice. How dearly, she cried, do I now pay for the unthinking plan with which I risked the peace of another, for the re-establishment of my own! She languished to throw herself into the arms of her father, to unbosom to him all her errors and distresses, and owe their extrication to his wisdom and kindness. She was sure he would be unmoved by the glare of a brilliant establishment, and that, far from desiring her to sacrifice her feelings to wealth and show, he would himself plead against the alliance when he knew the state of her mind, and recommend to her, so circumstanced, the single life, in the true spirit of christian philosophy and moderation; but all was so closely interwoven in the affairs and ill conduct of her brother, that she believed herself engaged in honour to guard the fatal secret, though hazarding by its concealment impropriety and misery.

These afflicting ruminations were at length interrupted by the sound of feet; she took her handkerchief from her eyes, expecting to see her sisters; she was mistaken, and beheld Mandlebert.

She started and rose; she strove to chase the tears from her eyes without wiping

them, and asked what he had done with Dr. Orkborne?

"You are in grief!" cried he in a tone of sympathy; "some evil has befallen you—let me ask—"

"No; I am only waiting for my sisters. They have just received letters from Lisbon."

"You have been weeping! you are weeping now! why do you turn away from me? I will not obtrusively demand your confidence—yet, could I give you the most distant idea what a weight it might remove from my mind,—you would find it difficult to deny yourself the pleasure of doing so much good!"

The tears of Camilla now steamed afresh. Words so kind from Edgar, the cold, the hard-hearted Edgar, surprised and overset her; yet she endeavoured to hide her face, and made an effort to pass him.

"Is not this a little unkind?" cried he, gravely; "however, I have no claim to oppose you."

"Unkind!" she repeated, and involuntarily turning to him, shewed a countenance of disconsolate, that he lost his self-control, and taking her reluctant hand, said: "O Camilla! torture me no longer!"

Almost transfixed with astonishment, she looked at him for a moment in speechless wonder;

wonder; but the interval of doubt was short; the character of Edgar for unalterable honour was fixed in her mind like "truths from holy writ," and she knew, with certainty incontrovertible, that his fate was at her disposal, from the instant he acknowledged openly her power over his feelings.

Every opposite sensation, that with violence the most ungovernable could encounter but to combat, now met in her bosom, elevating her to rapture, harrowing her with terror, menacing even her understanding. The most exquisite wish of her heart seemed accorded at a period so nearly too late for its acceptance, that her faculties, bewildered, confused, deranged; lost the capacity of clearly conceiving if still she were a free agent or not.

He saw her excess of disorder with alarm; he sought to draw her again to her seat; but she put her hand upon her forehead, and leant it against the bark of the tree.

"You will not speak to me!" cried he; "you will not trust me! shall I call you cruel? No! for you are not aware of the anguish you make me suffer! the generosity of your nature would else, unbidden, impulsively interfere."

"You suffer! you!" cried she, again distressfully, almost incredulously, looking

at him, while her hands were uplifted with amazement: "I thought you above any suffering! superior to all calamity!—almost to all feeling!—"

"Ah, Camilla! what thus estranges you from candor? from justice? what is it can prompt you to goad thus a heart which almost from its first beating—"

He stopt, desirous to check himself; while penetrated by his softness, and ashamed of what, in the bitterness of her spirit, she had pronounced, she again melted into tears, and sunk down upon the bench; yet holding out to him one hand, while with the other she covered her face: "Forgive me," she cried, "I intreat—for I scarcely know what I say."

Such a speech, and so accompanied, might have demolished the stoicism of an older philosopher than Edgar; he fervently kissed her proffered hand, exclaiming: "Forgive you! can Camilla use such a word? has she the slightest care for my opinion? the most remote concern for me or for my happiness?"

"Farewell! farewell!" cried she, hastily drawing away her hand, "go now, I beseech you!"

"What a moment to bid me depart! O Camilla! my soul sickens of this suspense! End it, generous Camilla! beloved

as lovely ! my heart is all your own ! accept it nobly, and use it gently !”

Every other emotion, now, in the vanquished Camilla, every retrospective fear, every actual regret, yielded to the conquering charm of grateful tenderness ; and restoring the hand she had withdrawn : “ O Edgar,” she cried, “ how little can I merit such a gift ! yet I prize it—far, far beyond all words !”

The agitation of Edgar was, at first, too mighty and too delicious for speech ; but his eyes, now cast up to heaven, now fixed upon her own, spoke the most ardent, yet purest felicity ; while her hand, now held to his heart, now pressed to his lips, strove vainly to recover its liberty. “ Blest moment !” he at length uttered, “ that finishes for ever such misery of uncertainty ! that gives my life to happiness—my existence to Camilla !”

Again speech seemed too poor for him. Perfect satisfaction is seldom loquacious ; its character is rather tender than gay ; and where, happiness succeeds abruptly to long solicitude and sorrow, its enjoyment is fearful ; it softens rather than exhilarates. Sudden joy is sportive, but sudden happiness is awful.

The pause, however, that on his side was, ecstatic thankfulness, soon became mixt, on

that of Camilla, with confusion and remorse: Sir Sedley returned to her memory, and with him every reflection, and every apprehension, that most cruelly could fully each trembling, though nearly gratified hope.

The cloud that so soon dimmed the transient radiance of her countenance, was instantly perceived by Edgar; but as he was beginning the most anxious inquiries, the two sisters approached, and Camilla, whose hand he then relinquished, rushed forward, and throwing her arms around their necks, wept upon their bosoms.

"Sweet sisters!" cried Edgar, embracing them all three in one; "long may ye thus endearingly entwine each other in the sacred links of affectionate affinity! Where shall I find our common father?—where is Mr. Tyeld?"

The amazed sisters could with difficulty answer that he was with their uncle, to whom he was communicating news from their mother.

Edgar looked tenderly at Camilla, but, perceiving her emotion, forbore to speak to her, though he could not deny himself the pleasure of snatching one kiss of the hand which hung down upon the shoulder of Eugenia; he then whispered to both the sisters:

sisters: "You will not, I trust, be my enemies?" and hurried to the house.

"What can this mean?" cried Eugenia and Lavinia in a breath.

"It means," said Camilla, "that I am the most distressed—yet the happiest of human beings!"

This little speech, began with the deepest sigh, but finished with the most resplendent smile, only added to their wonder.

"I hope you have been consulting with Edgar," said the innocent Eugenia; "nobody can more ably advise you, since, in generosity to Lionel, you are prohibited from counselling with my father."

Again the most expressive smiles played in every feature through the tears of Camilla, as she turned, with involuntary archness, to Eugenia, and answered: "And shall I follow his counsel, my dear sister, if he gives me any?"

"Why not? he is wise, prudent, and much attached to us all. How he can have supposed it possible we could be his enemies, is past all divination!"

Gaiety was so truly the native growth of the mind of Camilla, that neither care nor affliction could chase it long from its home. The speeches of the unsuspecting Eugenia, that a moment before would have passed unheeded, now regaled her renovated fancy with

with a thousand amusing images, which so vigorously struggled against her sadness and her terrors, that they were soon nearly driven from the field by their sportive assailants; and, by the time she reached her chamber, whither, lost in amaze, her sisters followed her, the surprise she had in store for them, the pleasure with which she knew they would sympathise in her happiness, and the security of Edgar's decided regard, had liberated her mind from the shackles of reminiscence, and restored her vivacity to its original spirit.

Fastening, then, her door, she turned to them with a countenance of the brightest animation; alternately and almost wildly embraced them, and related the explicit declaration of Edgar; now hiding in their bosoms the blushes of her modest joy, now offering up to Heaven the thanksgiving of her artless rapture, now dissolving in the soft tears of the tenderest sensibility, according to the quick changing impulses of her natural and lively, yet feeling and susceptible character. Nor once did she look at the reverse of this darling portrait of chosen felicity, till Eugenia, with a gentle sigh, uttered: "Unhappy Sir Sedley Clarendon! how may this stroke be softened to him?" and now ended with a sigh: "Ah!"

“ Ah Eugenia !” she cried ; “ that alone is my impediment to the most perfect, the most unmixt content ! why have you made me think of him ?”

"My dear Camilla," said Eugenia, with a look of curious earnestness, and taking both her hands, while she seemed examining her face, "you are then, it seems, in love?"

Camilla, blushing, yet laughing, broke away from her, denying the charge.

A consultation then ensued upon the method of proceeding with the young Baronet. Tommy Hodd was not yet returned with the answer; it was five miles to Clarendel Place, which made going and returning his day's work. She resolved to wait but this one reply, and then to acknowledge to Edgar the whole of her situation. The delicacy of Lavinia, and the high honour of Eugenia, concurred in the propriety of this confession; and they all saw the urgent necessity of an immediate explanation with Sir Sedley. Painful, therefore, confusing and distasteful, as was the task, Camilla determined upon the avowal, and as completely to be guided by Edgar in this difficult conjuncture, as if his advice were already sanctioned by conjugal authority.

CHAP. XIII.

A Call of the House.

EDGAR returned to the parlour with a countenance so brightened, a joy so open, a confidence so manly, and an air so strongly announcing some interesting intelligence, that his history required little prelude. "Edgar," said Mr. Tyrold, "you have a look to disarm care of its corrosion. You could not take a better time to wear so cheering an aspect; I have just learnt that my wife can fix no sort of date for her return; I must borrow, therefore, some reflected happiness; and none, after my children, can bring its sunshine so home to my bosom as yourself."

"What a fortunate moment have you chosen," cried Edgar, affectionately taking him by the hand, "to express this generous pleasure in feeling me happy? Will you repent, will you retract, when you hear in what it may involve you?—Dearest sir! my honoured, my parental friend! to what a test shall I put your kindness!—Will you give

give me in charge one of the dearest ties of your existence? will you repose in my care so large a portion of your peace? will you trust to me your Camilla?"—

With all the ardour of her character, all the keen and quick feelings of her sensitive mind, scarcely had Camilla herself been more struck, more penetrated with sudden joy, sudden wonder, sudden gratification of every kind, than Mr. Tyrold felt at this moment. He more than returned the pressure with which Edgar held his hand, and instantly answered; "Yes, my excellent young friend, without a moment's hesitation, without a shadow of apprehension for her happiness! though she is all the fondest father can wish;—and though she only who gave her to me is dearer!"

Felicity and tenderness were now the sole guests in the breast of Edgar. He kissed with reverence the hand of Mr. Tyrold, called him by the honoured and endearing title of father; acknowledged that, from the earliest period of observation, Camilla had seemed to him the most amiable of human creatures; spoke with the warm devotion he sincerely felt for her of Mrs. Tyrold; and was breathing forth his very soul in tender rapture upon his happy prospects, when something between a sigh and a groan from the Baronet, made him hastily turn round,

round, apologise for not sooner addressing him, and respectfully solicit his consent.

Sir Hugh was in an agitation of delight and surprise almost too potent for his strength. "The Lord be good unto me," he cried; "have I lived to see such a day as this!" Then, throwing his arms about Edgar's neck, while his eyes were fast filling with tears, which soon ran plentifully down his cheeks, "Good young Mr. Edgar!" he cried; "good young man! and do you really love my poor Camilla, for all her not being worth a penny? And will my dear little darling come to so good an end at last, after being disinherited for doing nothing? And will you never vex her, nor speak an unkind word to her? Indeed, young Mr. Edgar, you are a noble boy! you are indeed; and I love you to the bottom of my old heart for this true good-naturedness!"

Then, again and again embracing him, "This is all of a piece," he continued, "with your saving my poor old Rover, which is a thing I shall never forget to my longest day, being a remarkable sign of a good heart; the poor dog having done nothing to offend, as we can all testify. So that it's a surprising thing what that mastiff owed him such a grudge for."

Then

Then quitting him abruptly to embrace Mr. Tyrold, "My dear brother," he cried, "I hope your judgment approves this thing, as well as my sister's, when she comes to hear it, which I shall send off express, before I sleep another wink, for fear of accidents."

"Approve," answered Mr. Tyrold, with a look of the most expressive kindness at Edgar, "is too cold a word; I rejoice, even thankfully rejoice, to place my dear child in such worthy and beloved hands."

"Well, then," cried the enchanted baronet, "if that's the case, that we are all of one mind, we had better settle the business at once, all of us being subject to die by delay."

He then rang the bell, and ordered Jacob to summon Camilla to the parlour, adding, "And all the rest too, Jacob, for I have something to tell them every one, which, I make no doubt, they will be very glad to hear, yourself included, as well as your fellow-servants, who have no right to be left out; only let my niece come first, being her own affair."

Camilla obeyed not the call without many secret sensations of distress and difficulty, but which, mingled with the more obvious

obvious ones of modesty and embarrassment, all passed for a flutter of spirits that appeared natural to the occasion.

Mr. Tyrold could only silently embrace her: knowing what she had suffered, and judging thence the excess of her present satisfaction, he would not add to her confusion by any intimation of his consciousness; but the softness with which he held her to his bosom spoke, beyond all words, his heartfelt sympathy in her happiness.

Camilla had no power to draw herself from his arms; but Edgar hovered round her, and Sir Hugh repeatedly and impatiently demanded to have his turn. Mr. Tyrold, gently disengaging himself from her embraces, gave one of her hands to Edgar, who, with grateful joy, pressed it to his lips. "My children!" he then said, laying a hand upon the shoulder of each, "what a sight is this to me! how precious a union! what will it be to your excellent mother! So long and so decidedly it has been our favourite earthly wish, that, were she but restored to me—to her country and to her family—I might, perhaps, require some new evil to prevent my forgetting where—and what I am!"

"My dear brother, I say! my dear niece! My dear Mr. young Edgar!" cried Sir Hugh, in the highest good humour, though

though with nearly exhausted patience, "won't you let me put in a word?" nor so much as give you my blessing? though I can hardly hold life and soul together for the sake of my joy!"

Camilla cast herself into his arms. He kissed her most fondly, saying: "Don't forget your poor old uncle, my dear little girl, for the account of this young Mr. Edgar, because, good as he is, he has taken to you but a short time in comparison with me."

"No," said Edgar, still tenaciously retaining the hand parentally bestowed upon him; "no, dear Sir Hugh, I wish not to rob you of your darling. I wish but to be admitted myself into this dear and respected family, and to have Etherington, Cleves, and Beech Park, considered as our alternate and common habitations."

"You are the very best young man in the whole wide world!" cried Sir Hugh, almost sobbing with ecstasy; "for you have hit upon just the very thing I was thinking of in my own private mind! What a mercy it is our not accepting that young Captain, who would have run away with her to I don't know where, instead of being married to the very nearest estate in the county, that will always be living with us!"

The rest of the family now, obedient to
the

the direction of Jacob, who had intimated that something extraordinary was going forward, entered the room.

"Come in, come in," cried Sir Hugh, "and hear the good news; for we have just been upon the very point of losing the best opportunity that ever we had in our lives of all living together; which, I hope, we shall now do, without any more strangers coming upon us with their company, being a thing we don't desire."

"But what's the good news, uncle?" said Indiana; "is it only about our living together?"

"Why, yes, my dear, that's the first principal, and the other is, that young Mr. Edgar's going to marry Camilla; which I hope you won't take ill, liking being all fancy."

"Me?" cried she, with a disdainful toss of the head, though severely mortified; "it's nothing to me, I'm sure!"

Camilla ashamed, and Edgar embarrassed, strove now mutually to shew Sir Hugh they wished no more might be said: but he only embraced them again, and declared he had never been so full of joy before in his whole life, and would not be cut short.

Mills Margland, extremely piqued, vented her spleen in oblique sarcasms, and sought to heal her offended pride by appeals for justice

justice to her sagacity and foresight in the whole business.

Jacob, now, opening the door, said all the servants were come.

Camilla tried to escape; but Sir Hugh would not permit her, and the house-keeper and butler led the way; followed by every other domestic of the house.

“Well, my friends,” he cried, “with her joy, which I am sure you will do of your own accord, for she’s going to be mistress of Beech-Park; which I thought would have been the case with my other niece, till I found out my mistake; which is of no consequence now, all having ended for the best; though unknown to us poor mortals.”

The servants obeyed with alacrity, and offered their hearty congratulations to the blushing Camilla and happy Edgar, Molly Mill excepted; who, having concluded Sir Sedley Clarendel the man, doubted her own senses, and, instead of open felicitations, whispered Camilla, “Dear Mills, I’ve got another letter for you! It’s here in my bosom.”

Camilla, frightened, said: “Hush! hush!” while Edgar, imagining the girl, whose simplicity and talkativeness were familiar to him, had said something ridiculous, intreated to be indulged with hearing her

her remark : but seeing Camilla look grave, he forbore to press his request.

The Baronet now began an harangue upon the happiness that would accrue from these double unions, for which he assured them they should have double remembrances, though the same preparations would do for both, as he meant they should take place at the same time, provided Mr. Edgar would have the obligingness to wait for a fair wind, which he was expecting every hour.

Camilla could now stay no longer ; nor could Edgar, though adoring the hearty joy of Sir Hugh, refuse to aid her in absconding.

He begged her permission to follow, as soon as it might be possible, which she tacitly accorded. She was impatient herself for the important conference she was planning, and felt, with increasing solicitude, that all her life's happiness hung upon her power to extricate herself honourably from the terrible embarrassment in which she was involved.

She sauntered about the hall till the servants came out, anxious to receive the letter which Molly Mill had announced. They all sought to surround her with fresh good wishes ; but she singled out Molly, and begged the rest to leave her for the present.

The

The letter, however, was not unpinned from the inside of Molly's neck handkerchief, before Edgar, eager and gay, joined her.

Trembling then, she intreated her to make haste.

"La, Miss," answered the girl, "if you hurry me so, I shall tear it as sure as can be; and what will you say then, Miss?"

"Well—then—another time will do—take it to my room."

"No, no, Miss; the gentleman told Tommy Hodd he wanted an answer as quick as can be; he said if Tommy'd come a horseback, he'd pay for the horse, to make him quicker; and Tommy says he always behaves very handsome."

She then gave her the squeezed billet. Camilla, in great confusion, put it into her pocket. Edgar, who even unavoidably heard what passed, held back till Molly retired; and then, with an air of undisguised surprise and curiosity, though in a laughing tone, said, "Must not the letter be read till I make my bow?"

"O yes," cried she, stammering, "it may be read—at any time." And she put her hand in her pocket to re-produce it. But the idea of making known the strange and unexpected history she had to relate, by shewing so strange a correspondence, without one leading and softening previous

circumstance, required a force and confidence of which she was not mistress. She twisted it, therefore, hastily round, to hide the hand-writing of the direction; and, then, with the same care, rolled it up, and ~~circled~~ circled it with her fingers.

"Shall I be jealous?" said he, gently, though disappointed.

"You have much reason!" she answered with a smile so soft, it dispelled every fear; yet with an attention so careful to conceal the address, that it kept alive every wonder. He took her other hand, and, kissing it, cried: "No, sweetest Camilla, such unworthy distrust shall make no part of our compact. Yet I own myself a little interested to know what gentleman has obtained a privilege I should myself prize above almost any other. I will leave you, however, to read the letter, and, perhaps, before you answer it—but no—I will ask nothing; I shall lose all pleasure in your confidence, if it is not spontaneous." "I will go and find your sisters." "I loved (in return) I . . . The first impulse of Camilla was to commit to him immediately the unopened letter: but the fear of its contents, its title, its requisitions, made her terror overpower her generosity; and, though she looked after him with regret, she stood still to break the seal of her letter.

Miss

Miss Camilla Tyrold.

Is it thus, O far too fair tormenter! thou delightest to torture? Dost thou give wings but to clip them? raise expectation but to bid it linger? fan bright the flame of hope, but to see it consume in its own ashes? Another delay?—Ah! tell me how I may exist till it terminates! Name to me, O fair tyrant! some period,—or build not upon longer forbearance, but expect me at your feet. You talk of the Grove: its fair owner is just returned, and calls herself impatient to see you. To-morrow, then,—you will not, I trust, kill me again to-morrow? With the sun, the renovating sun, I will visit those precincts, nor quit them till warned away by the pale light of Diana: tell me, then, to what century of that period your ingenious cruelty condemns me to this expiring state, ere a vivifying smile recalls me back to life?

SEDLEY CLARENDEL.

The immediate presence of Edgar himself could not have made this letter dye the cheeks of Camilla of a deeper red. She saw that Sir Sedley thought her only coquetishly trifling, and she looked forward with nearly equal horror to clearing up a mistake that might embitter his future life, and to acknowledging to Edgar—the scrupulous, the scrutinising, the delicate Edgar

—that such a mistake could have been formed.

She was ruminating upon this terrible task, when Edgar again appeared, accompanied by her sisters. She hurried the letter into her pocket. Edgar saw the action with a concern that damp't his spirits; he wished to obtain from her immediately the unlimited trust, which immediately and for ever, he meant to repose in her. They all strolled together for a short time in the park; but she was anxious to retreat to her room, and her sisters were dying with impatience to read Sir Sedley's letter. Edgar disturbed to see how little any of their countenances accorded with the happy feelings he had so recently experienced, proposed not to lengthen the walk, but flattered himself, upon re-entering the house, Camilla would afford him a few minutes of explanation. But she only, with a faint smile, said she should soon return to the parlour; and he saw Molly Mill eagerly waiting for her upon the stairs, and heard her, in reply to some question concerning Tommy Hodd, desire the girl to be quiet till she got to her room.

Edgar could form no idea of what all this meant, yet, that some secret disturbance preyed upon Camilla, that some gentleman wrote to her, and expected impatiently an answer; and that the correspondence passed
neither

neither through her friends, nor by the post, but by the medium of Molly Mill, were circumstances not less unaccountable than unpleasant.

Camilla, meanwhile, produced the letter to her sisters, beseeching their ablest counsel. "See but," she cried, "how dreadfully unprepared is Sir Sedley for the event of the day! And oh!—how yet more unprepared must be Edgar for seeing that such a letter could ever be addressed to me! How shall I shew it him, my dear sisters? how help his believing I must have given every possible encouragement, ere Sir Sedley could have written to me in so assured a style?"

Much deliberation ensued: but they were all so perplexed, that they were summoned to tea before they had come to any resolution.

The counsel of Eugenia, then, prevailed; and it was settled, that Camilla should avoid for the present, any communication to Edgar, lest it should lead to mischief between him and the young baronet; that the next morning she should set out for the Grove, and there cast herself wholly upon the generosity of Sir Sedley; and, when freed from all engagement, return, and relate, without reserve the whole history to Edgar. She wrote, therefore, one line, to say she would see Mrs. Arlbery early the next day, and delivered it to Molly Mill; who promised

mised to borrow a horse of the under-groom that Tommy Hodd might be back before bed-time, without any obligation to Sir Sedley.

She then went down stairs, where Edgar, disappointed by her long absence, sought vainly to recompense it by conversing with her. She was gentle, but seated herself aloof, and avoided his eyes.

His desire to unravel so much mystery he thought now to legitimate by his peculiar situation, that he was frequently upon the point of soliciting for information: but, to know himself privileged, upon further reflexion, was sufficient to insure his forbearance. Even when that knot was tied which would give to him all power, he sincerely meant to owe all her trust to willing communication. Should he now, then, make her deem him exacting, and tenacious of prerogative? no; it might shackle the freedom of her mind in their future intercourse. He would quietly, therefore, wait her own time, and submit to her own inclination. She could not doubt his impatience; he would not compel her generosity.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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